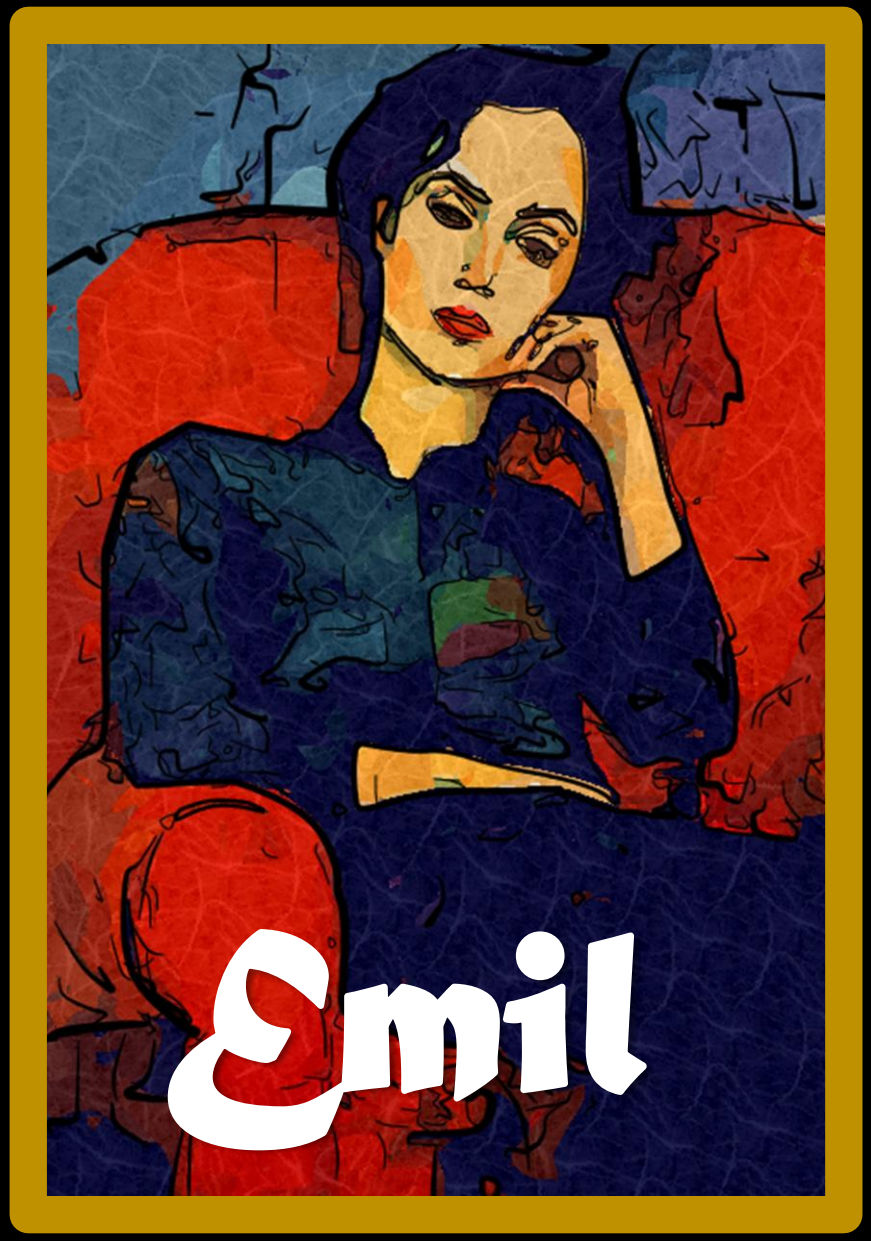


FEASIBLE FOR
TWO SUNS
TO COEXIST IN THE SAME SKY

SHANGHAI - APRIL 1949

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY
WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. SINGAPORE - 2026

A great deal has transformed in Shanghai since my last correspondence at the beginning of the year. It might be a bit of an exaggeration to claim that we were optimistic about 1949, especially with it being the Year of the Earth Ox, a symbol often associated with strength and perseverance.

The air was thick with speculation, particularly as reports suggested that Chiang Kai-Shek might be experiencing a significant change of heart, akin to a “Road to Damascus” revelation.

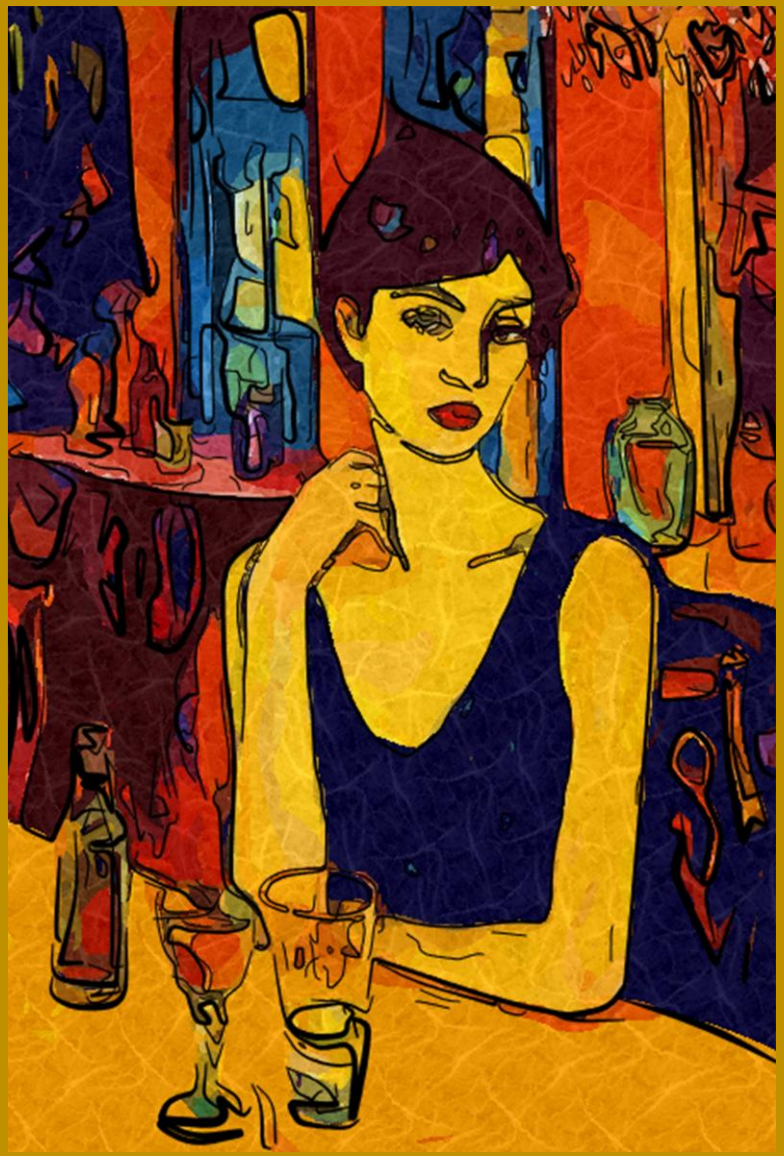
This narrative, however, seemed to be more of a fabrication spun by the Kuomintang, who were eager to paint a rosy picture during the New Year celebrations.

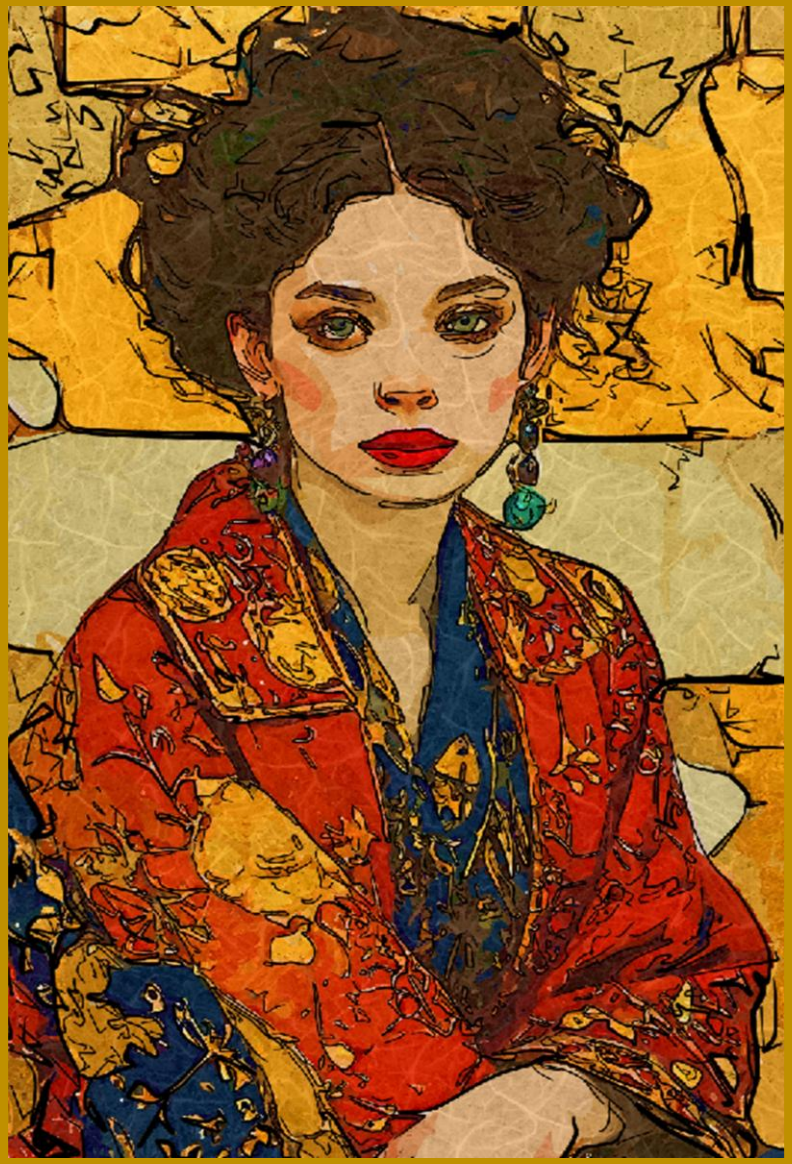
It's worth noting that this particular spin

managed to earn him quite a few complimentary drinks on New Year's Eve, as he regaled the crowd with tales of impending transformation, leaving many to wonder if there was any truth behind the bravado.
The narrative unfolded around the old general, who had undergone a significant shift in his perspective regarding the distribution of power with the Communist leaders.
He began to entertain the notion that perhaps it was feasible for two suns to coexist in the same sky, a metaphorical representation of shared governance.
This was a stark contrast to his earlier stance, where he had firmly told President Truman's ambassador that the idea of negotiating a coalition government with Mao was impossible, as it implied the existence of two

suns, which he deemed unthinkable.
The general's newfound openness suggested a potential thaw in relations, hinting at the possibility of collaboration where once there was only conflict. This evolution in his thinking not only reflected the changing political landscape but also underscored the complexities of leadership during a tumultuous period in history.
The yearning for peace resonated deeply among the weary foot soldiers on both sides of the conflict, each man burdened by the relentless toll of war.
It was a shared sentiment, a collective exhaustion that transcended allegiances, as they all longed for an end to the violence that had consumed their lives.

Observing from a distance, one could reflect on the nearly century-long cycle of warfare that had persisted since the Boxer Revolution, a grim testament to humanity's inability to break free from the chains of conflict.
For many of these soldiers, and even more so for their inept leaders, the art of war had become the only skill they possessed; the thought of a life without battle was terrifying. They feared that in the absence of war, they would be reduced to a ragtag group of untrained drifters or, worse yet, be forced to embrace a life of crime to survive.
This bleak reality painted a stark picture of a world where the instinct to fight overshadowed the desire for peace, leaving them trapped in a cycle of violence with no clear path to redemption.





The idea of peace seems to instill fear in the hearts of these generals and warlords, as the ongoing conflict has proven to be immensely profitable for them.
War has not only filled their coffers but has also secured a legacy of wealth for their families, even if they themselves may not have lived long enough to savor the fruits of their endeavors.
The riches amassed through violence and chaos create a powerful incentive to maintain the status quo, as the prospect of peace threatens to dismantle the lucrative systems they have built.
For these leaders, the end of hostilities could mean a loss of power and influence, as well as the erosion of the financial empires they have built on the backs of suffering and strife.

Thus, the allure of continued warfare overshadows the potential benefits of a peaceful resolution, leaving them entrenched in a cycle of conflict that serves their interests above all else

As we near the month of May, the city has become a refuge for an estimated six to ten million individuals escaping the dual threats of war and famine that plague the rural areas. This influx of people has strained the already limited resources, with essential services primarily accessible only to those with connections or residing in a few exclusive suburbs.

These neighborhoods have taken measures to ensure their safety by hiring private security teams, often composed of former Japanese soldiers who find themselves unable to afford

passage back to their homeland or are simply stranded in this chaotic environment.
The stark contrast between the privileged few and the desperate masses highlights the growing divide in a city grappling with unprecedented challenges.
There are whispers circulating that the Communists may seize control of Shanghai by early May.
However, I find this notion highly questionable. It seems unwise for anyone to willingly take on the monumental task of managing a city with a population of 10 million, especially when the pressing issue of hunger looms large.
The reality is that the Communists are reportedly struggling to secure adequate

supplies for themselves, relying on the land for sustenance.

Given these circumstances, the prospect of governing such a vast and needy populace appears not only daunting but also fraught with challenges that would deter even the most ambitious leaders.

I share the skepticism felt by many regarding the soothsayers and fearmongers who have left, as well as those who are desperately trying to sell off their possessions to fund their escape.

This sentiment is echoed by numerous expatriates, including those who have endured the hardships of internment camps, who find themselves grappling with uncertainty about the future.

While many express a wistful regret over the

lucrative opportunities in Shanghai's prime real estate market—opportunities that could yield significant profits if only they had the cash to invest—there is a stark reality that complicates their aspirations.

The current financial climate has tightened to such an extent that credit is virtually nonexistent; even the once-generous bar tabs have vanished, leaving many feeling both frustrated and trapped in a city that holds so much potential yet feels increasingly out of reach.

To my great dismay, Mister Charles, the newly appointed manager of the KitKat, convened a staff meeting to deliver some unexpected news.

Following the arrest of the previous owner and his discreet Japanese investors on serious

charges related to war crimes and racketeering, many of us had hoped for stability and a fresh start.
However, Charles announced that he had decided to sell his stake in KitKat and would be leaving for a new opportunity in Singapore the following Monday morning.
This revelation left the team in shock, as we had anticipated his leadership would guide us through the tumultuous aftermath of recent events.
Instead, we were faced with yet another transition, raising questions about the future of the establishment and the direction it would take without his involvement.
Mister Charles had endured the harrowing experience of years spent in Japanese internment camps, which understandably

colored his perception of the current situation. His heightened anxiety over rumors of an impending Communist threat seemed rooted in a deep-seated desire to avoid repeating the mistakes of 1941, when he had dismissed similar warnings and faced dire consequences. Despite his fears, I remained optimistic about Shanghai's prospects.

To bolster my confidence, I decided to visit the British Consulate, hoping to gain a clearer understanding of the unfolding events.

The Consul General and his team frequently appeared in the press, consistently reassuring the expatriate community that the talk of a Communist offensive was nothing more than unfounded speculation, designed to incite unnecessary panic among residents.

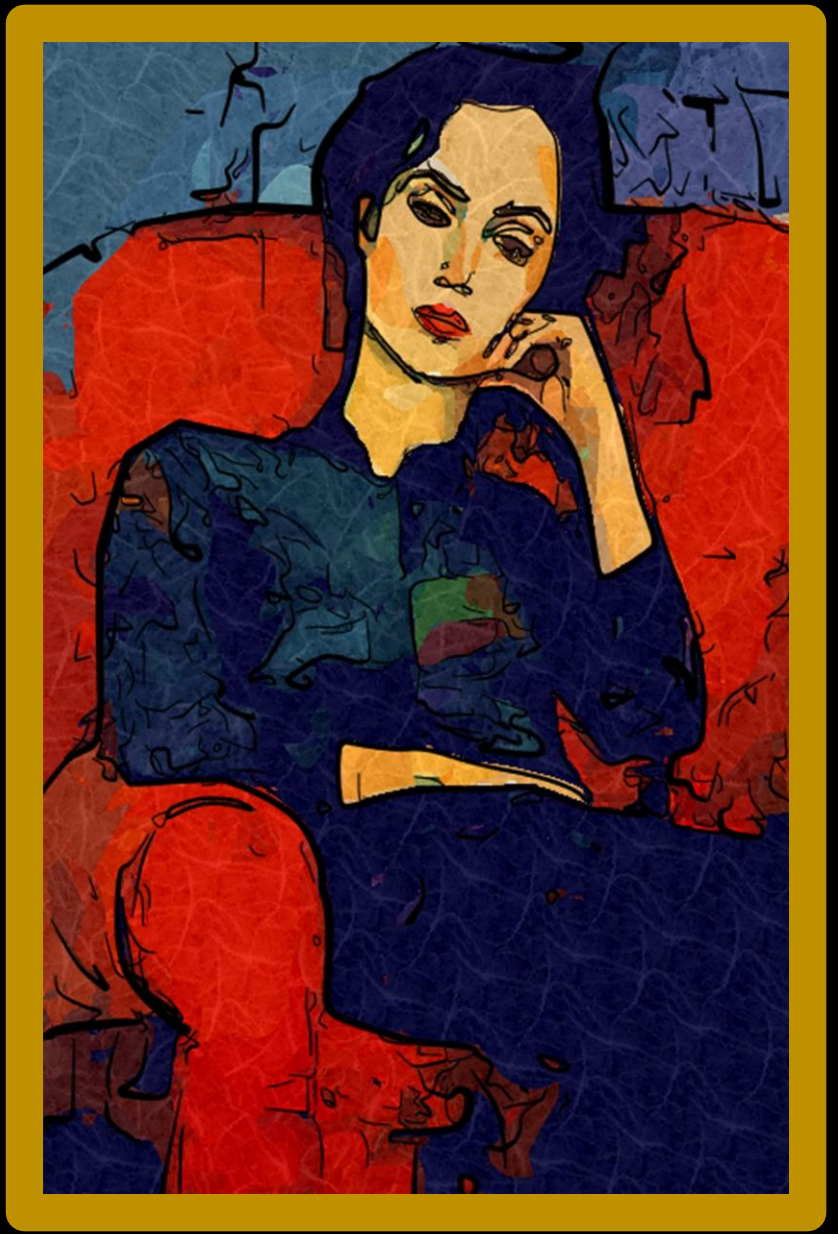
Their messages aimed to quell fears and

restore a sense of stability, which I found encouraging as I considered the future of our city.

I must admit that I was thoroughly impressed by the atmosphere at the Consulate, where the sight of numerous tailored suits and gleaming shoes created an air of professionalism that was both striking and reassuring.

It was a refreshing experience that instilled in me a sense of confidence, suggesting that perhaps the Consul General was indeed on the right track.

During my visit, I had a particularly engaging conversation with a young man at the front counter, who shared that he had recently returned from a foreign service assignment in London.



His insights were not only informative but also encouraging, as he advised me to explore some of the real estate opportunities I had mentioned.

His enthusiasm and knowledge left me feeling optimistic about the prospects ahead, making my time at the Consulate both enjoyable and productive.

As he recounted his experiences as an assistant to the undersecretary of the mission, I was captivated by his insights, particularly considering that he had only graduated from Oxford a year prior.

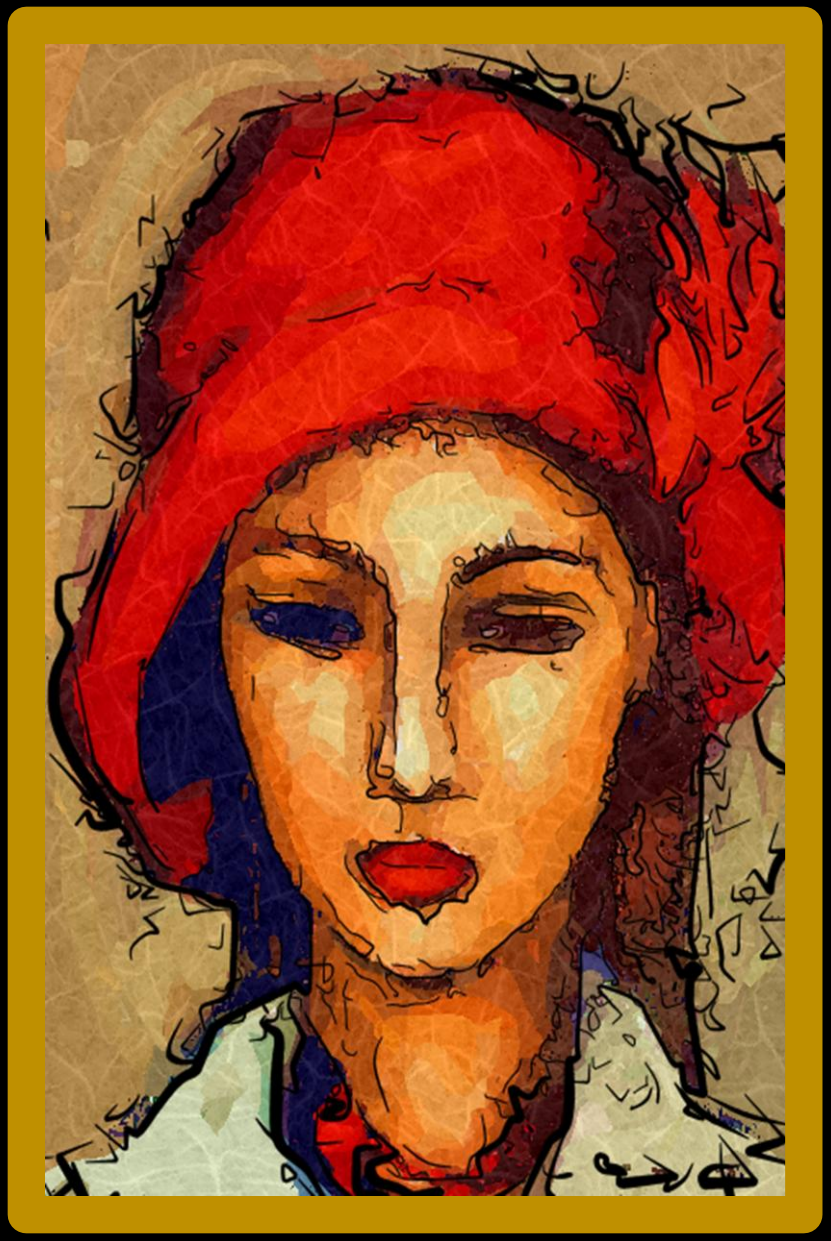
His enthusiasm was palpable as he described the intricacies of his role, navigating the complexities of diplomatic protocols and the fast-paced environment of international relations.

Just as he was delving deeper into his narrative, the atmosphere shifted dramatically; the sound of rumbling trucks filled the air, signaling the arrival of a convoy. Security personnel sprang into action, meticulously unloading a diverse assortment of cabinets and boxes, each one likely containing sensitive materials essential for the mission.

The juxtaposition of his reflective storytelling against the backdrop of this sudden logistical frenzy created a vivid scene, underscoring the unpredictable nature of his work and the urgency that often accompanied it.

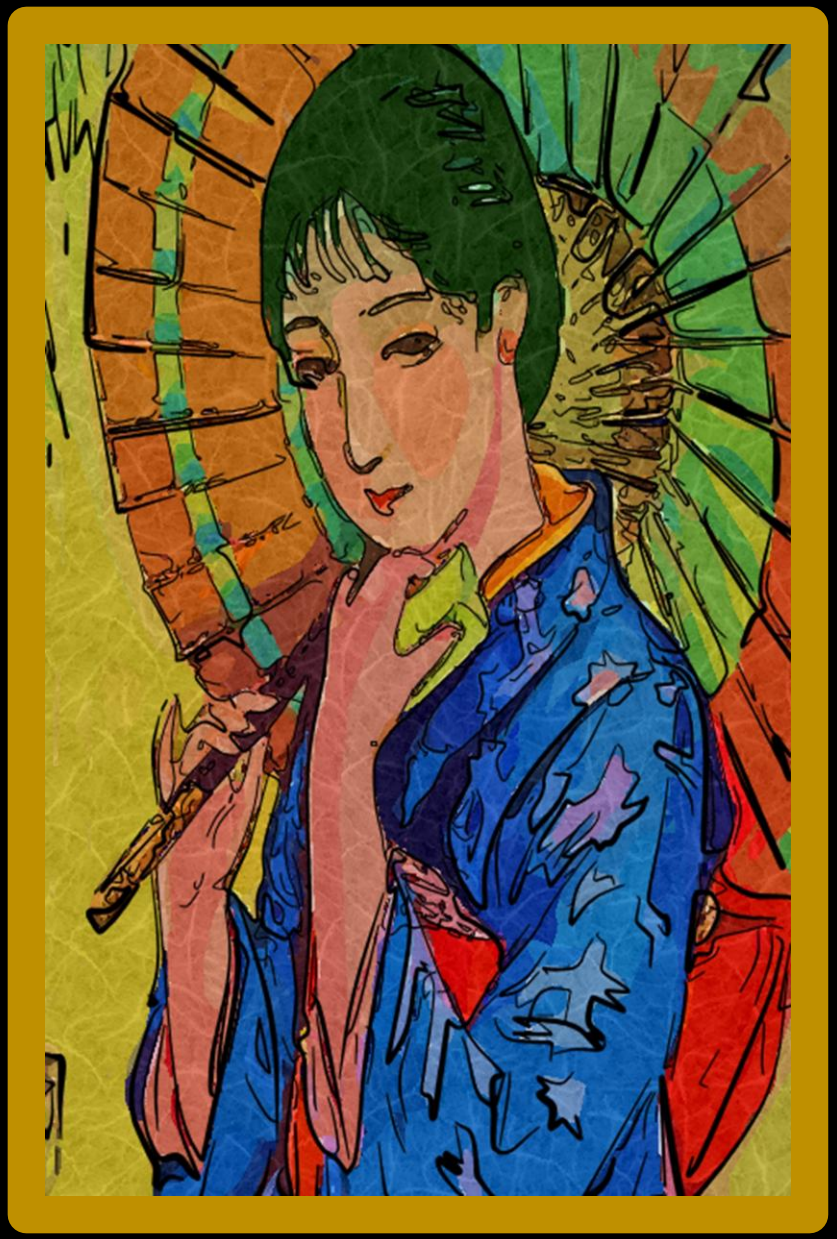
The young man, clearly flustered by the situation, quickly attempted to reassure me with a breathless explanation:

"It's just a bit of housekeeping to prepare for



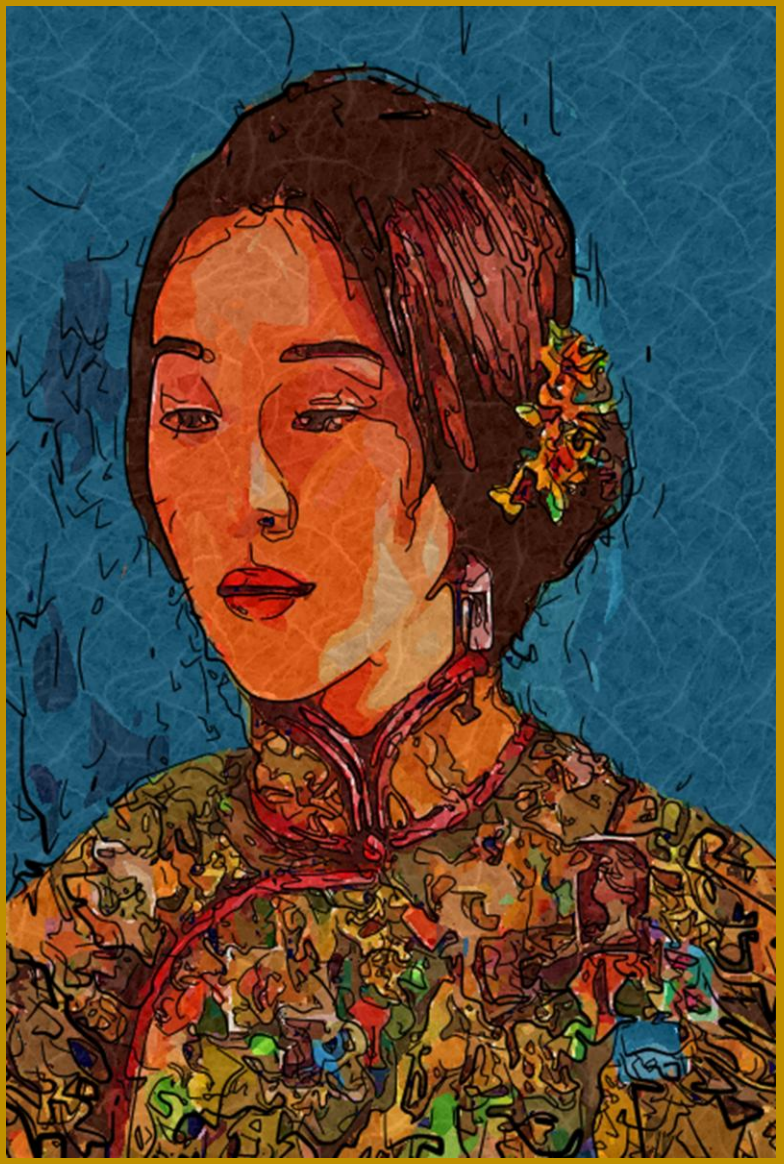
the new staff arriving in May..."
While many might view me as somewhat slow-witted or lacking in intelligence, my extensive experiences in the obscure corners of life have equipped me with a keen sense for recognizing genuine panic and urgency, which starkly contrasted with the tidy narrative the young man at the Consult was trying to sell me.
His words felt like a thin veil over a deeper, more chaotic reality, one that I could sense lurking beneath the surface.
I understood that the seemingly innocuous task of tidying up was likely a cover for something more significant, a shift that hinted at underlying tensions or impending changes that were not being openly discussed.
Yesterday, I visited the English Consult, only to find the building in a state of near

abandonment, with most of its furnishings removed.
The atmosphere was eerily quiet, and neither the young staff member I had previously interacted with nor any of his supervisors were present.
As I wandered through the desolate space, I encountered a friendly security guard, a Japanese gentleman in his late twenties.
He informed me that the entire team had evacuated to Hong Kong just the day before, leaving the once-bustling office eerily empty and devoid of life.
The abruptness of the situation left me with a sense of unease, as I pondered the reasons behind such a sudden departure.
As I made my way back to the recently renovated penthouse suite at the Old Majestic



Boarding House, a swirl of thoughts occupied my mind, prompting me to reflect on the implications of recent events.
The once-revered counsel of the Consul General, which had led me to dismiss the alarming tales of a communist offensive, now seemed increasingly misguided.
It was becoming evident that my initial disappointment in Mister Charles was unwarranted; he was revealing layers of complexity that I had previously overlooked.
The atmosphere in the suite felt charged with a sense of possibility, as I began to reassess my perceptions and the narratives that had shaped my understanding of the situation.
Seine has just returned from Hong Kong, armed with transit papers and a confirmed booking on a steamer for Claudie, herself, and

me, all set to embark on a journey to the bustling city.
According to reliable sources, the Communist forces are poised to take Shanghai, primarily to avert a looming humanitarian crisis.
The Kuomintang Taipans have largely abandoned the city, fleeing with whatever valuables they could carry, leaving behind their weary troops to dissolve into the chaos of Shanghai's vast population of ten million.
This once-glorious jewel of the Orient, renowned as the gateway to China, now stands on the brink of becoming an open city, its fate hanging in the balance as the tides of conflict surge around it.
Seine pointed out that even the Communists recognize the dire consequences of abandoning 10 million hungry individuals to



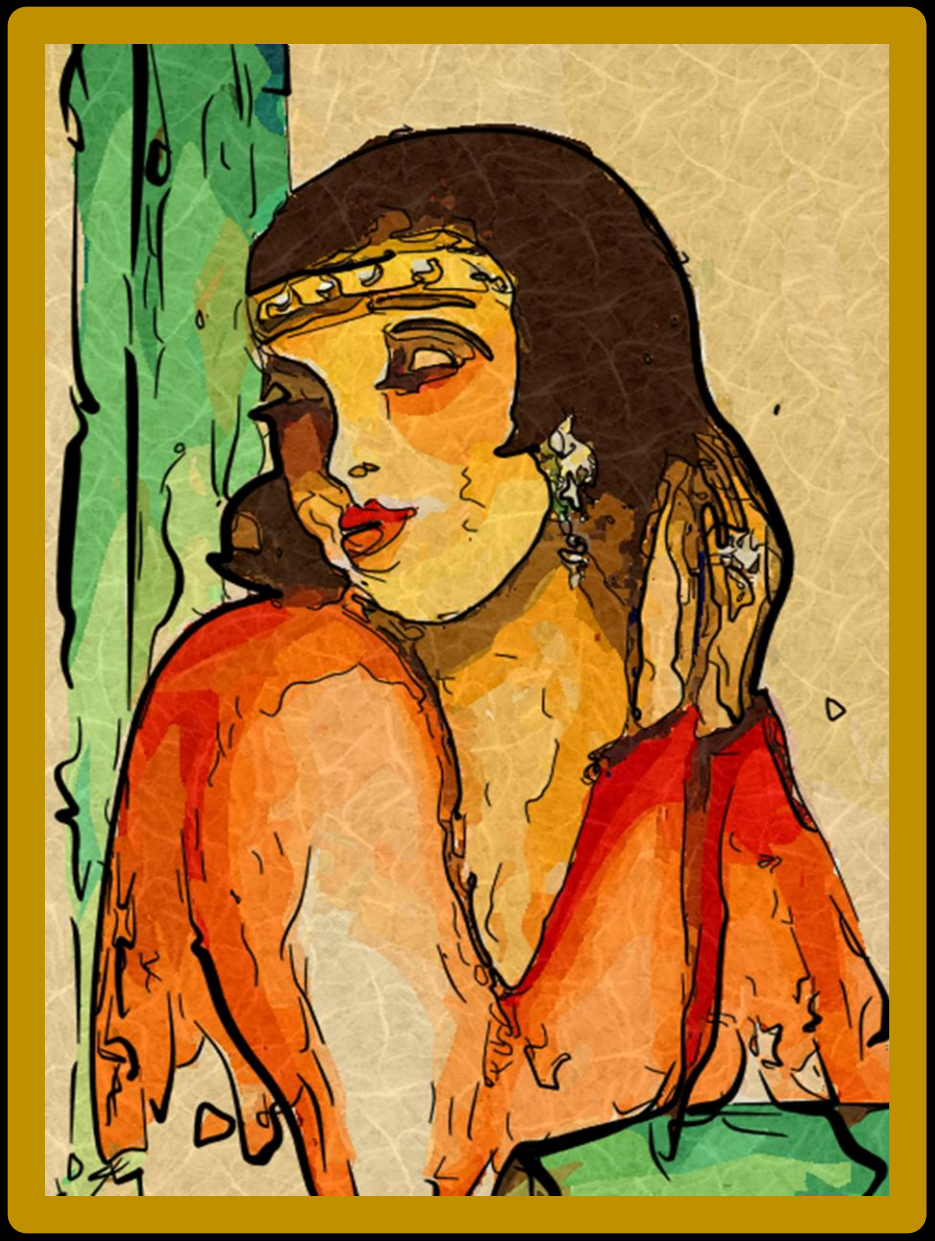
fend for themselves.
He noted that if one were to locate any members of the city administration, they would reveal that the city's food warehouses are alarmingly low, with supplies sufficient for only two to three weeks.
Furthermore, it has been reported that the Central Committee of the Shanghai District is actively developing a comprehensive strategy aimed at relocating many, if not all, of these millions of people.
This plan may involve moving them out to the countryside or facilitating their return to their hometowns, highlighting the urgent need for a coordinated response to the escalating crisis.
I found myself at the KitKat, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new management team,

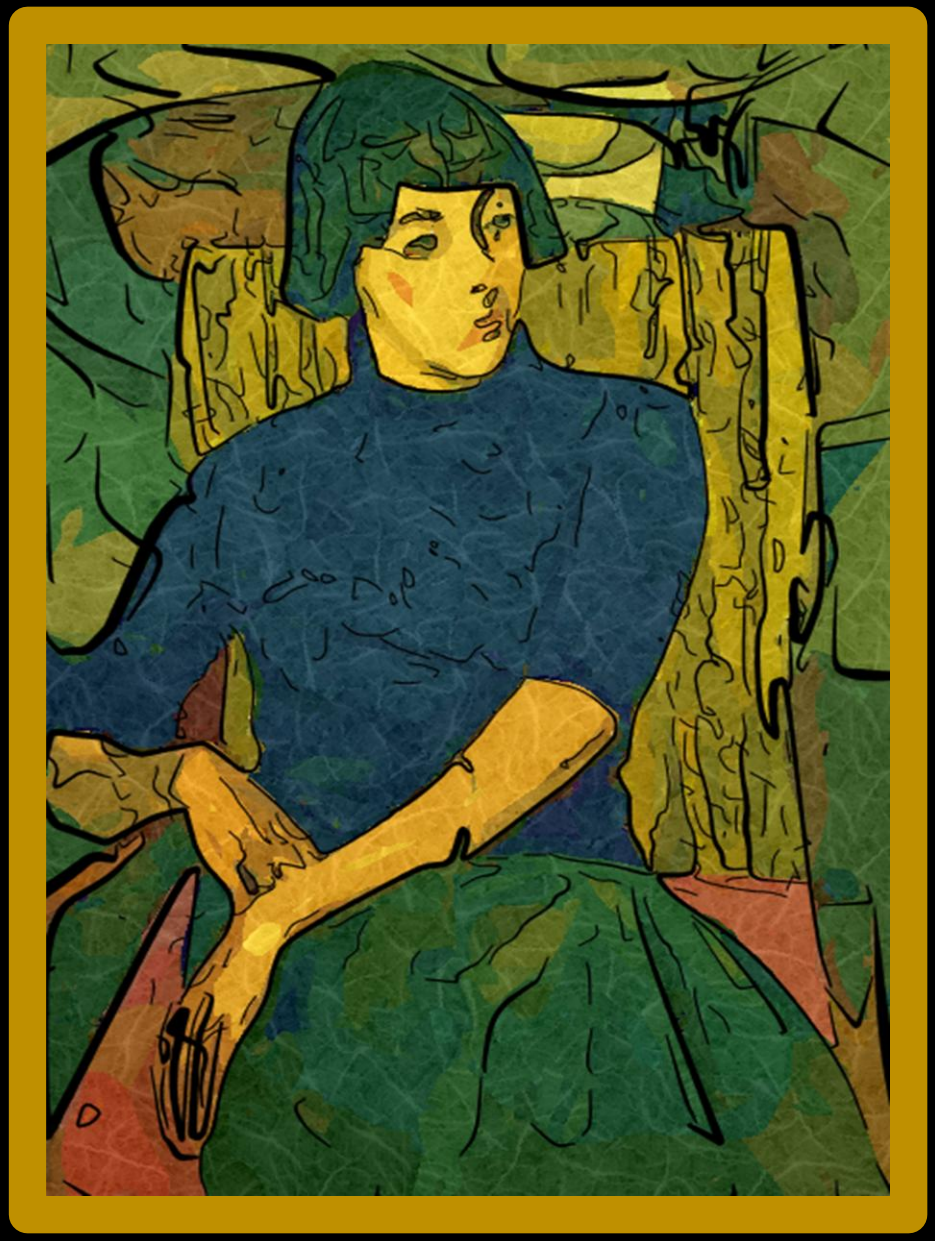
when I struck up a conversation with one of the seasoned bartenders.
We had arranged for a passage on a steamer bound for Hong Kong, and as I casually mentioned the name of the vessel, the bartender erupted into a hearty laugh.
With a twinkle in his eye, he remarked that my friend Seine was being quite generous in calling that dilapidated old boat a steamer, suggesting instead that it was more of a rusting hulk than a seaworthy craft.
His laughter echoed the sentiment that sometimes, the charm of a journey lies not in the vessel itself, but in the stories and camaraderie shared along the way.
He took a moment to gather his thoughts before revealing that the vessel we had booked for our journey in 1914 was not just

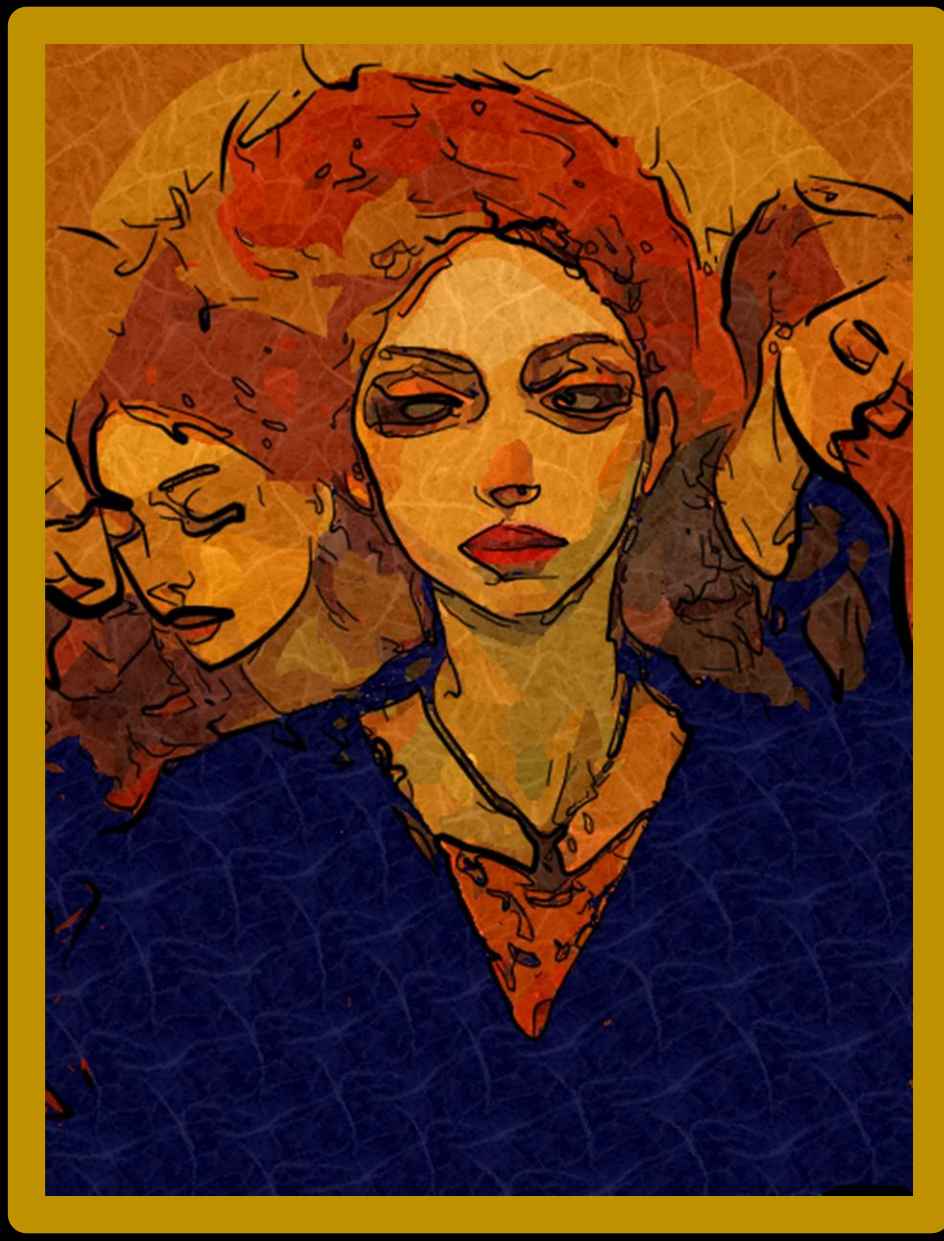
any ship; it was a relic from the war, long past its prime.
For the last two decades, this aging steamer had been repurposed as a floating seafood restaurant and casino, a far cry from its original purpose.
Realizing that I was blissfully unaware of the true condition of the ship destined to carry us to Hong Kong, he earnestly urged me to reconsider my travel plans.
concern for my safety was palpable, and in a lighthearted attempt to underscore the ship's dubious reliability, he jokingly offered me a thousand-to-one odds on its ability to navigate the harbor without either leaking or sinking entirely.
Amidst the whirlwind of events and countless other matters that I lack the energy or

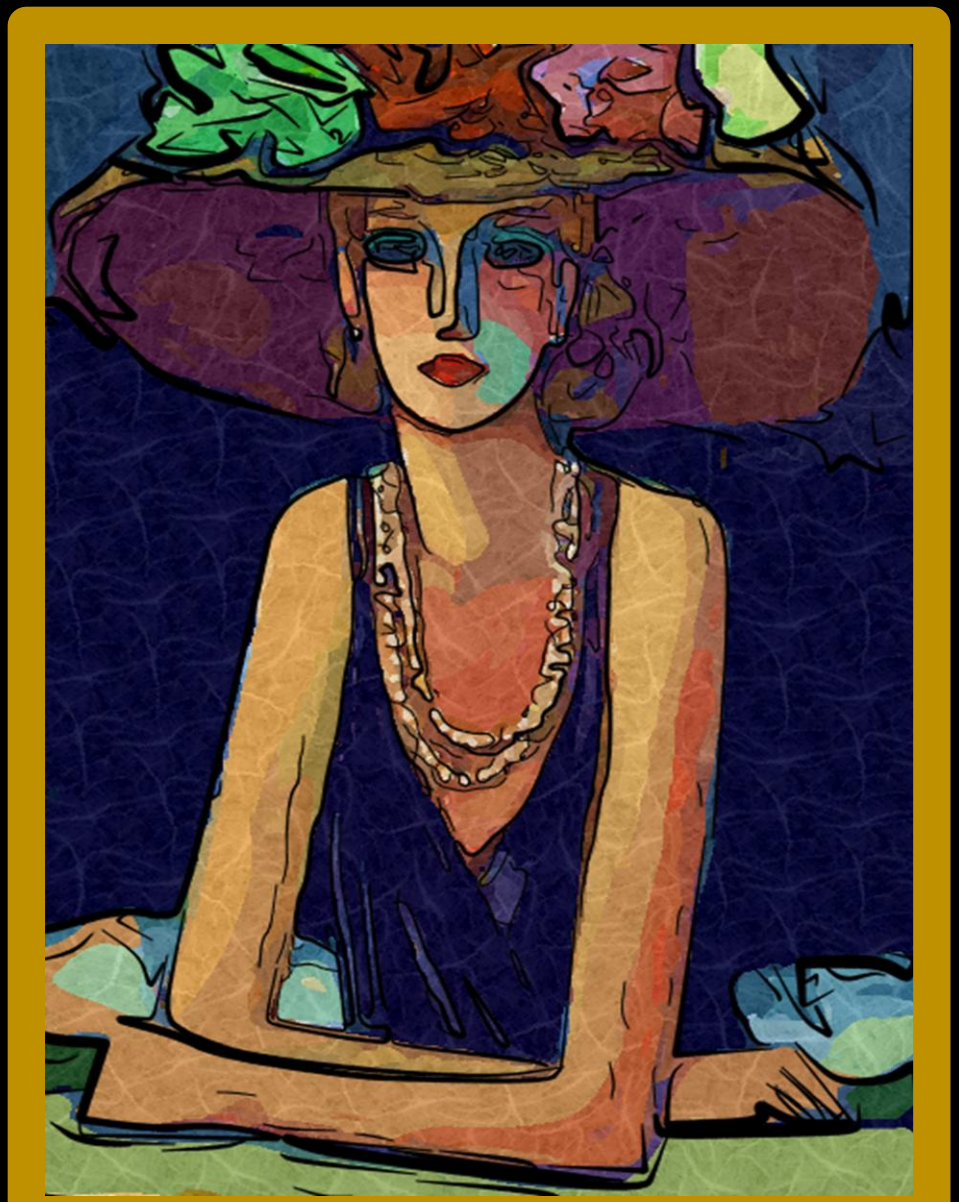
Aresources to elaborate on, I have compiled a collection of my latest artwork.
With a sense of hope, I am sending this package through the American military command office, praying that it reaches you safely.
I trust that you will be able to add these pieces to the steamer trunk you are so kindly keeping for me.
Your support means the world, and I can only imagine how wonderful it will be to see my creations stored away, waiting for the day we can reunite.
Hope you are well!

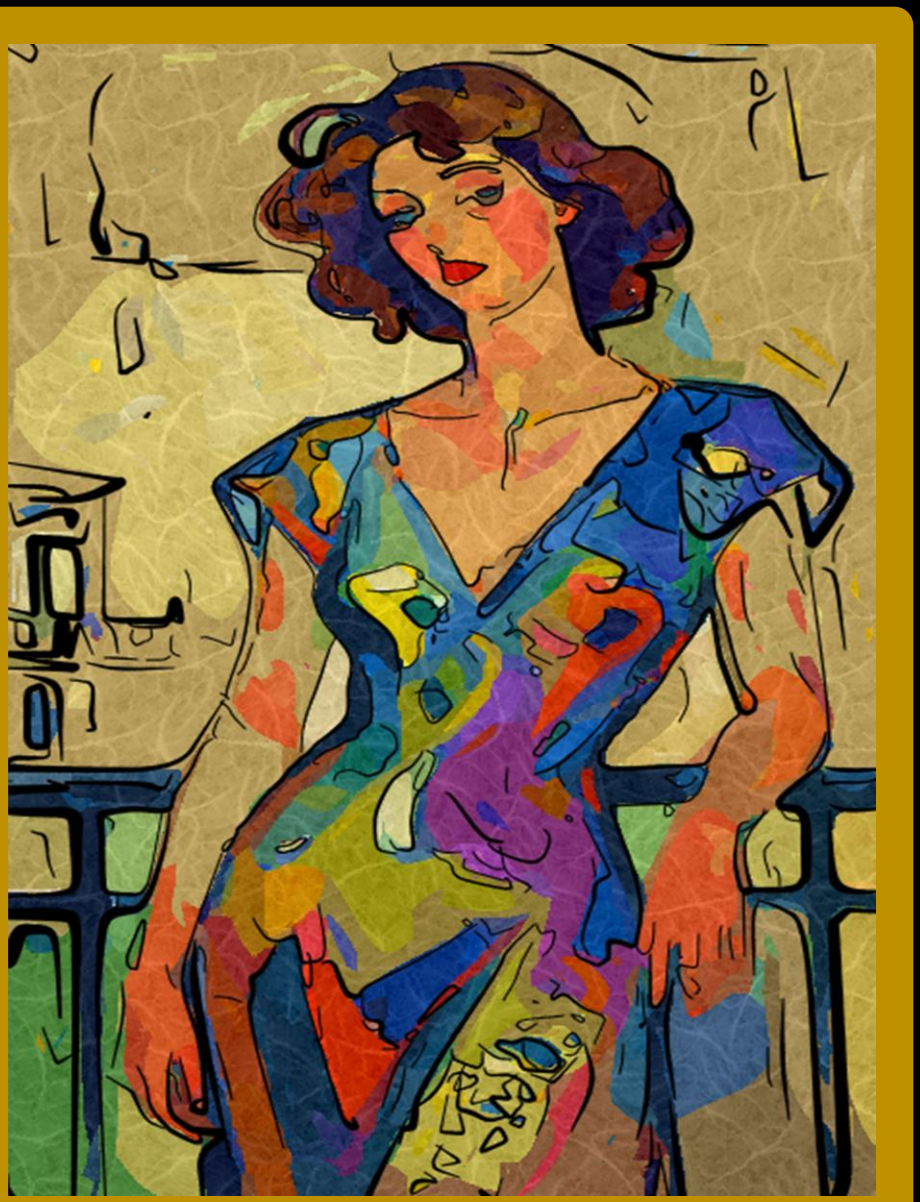
Emil
April 19, 1949
Majestic Hotel - Shanghai

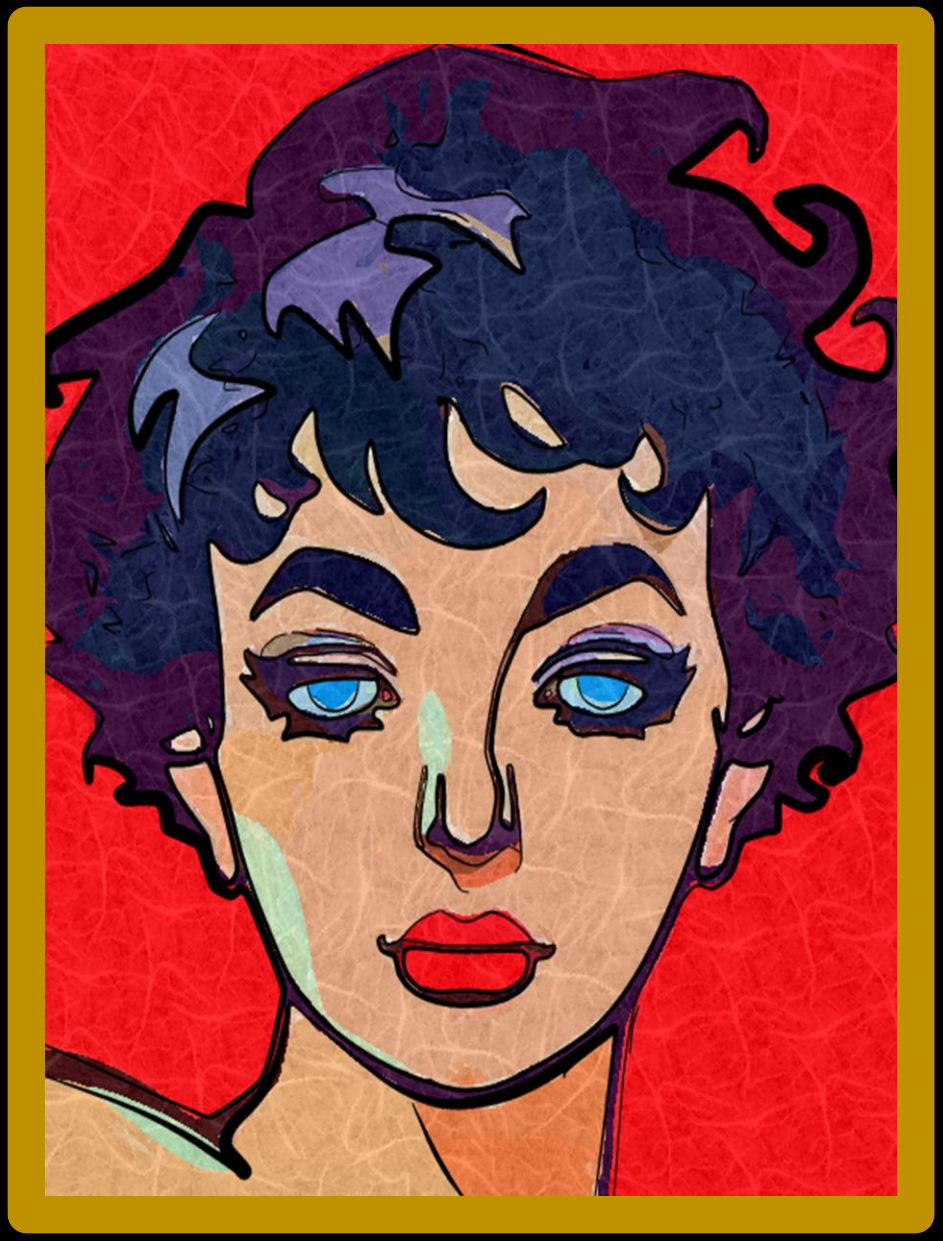


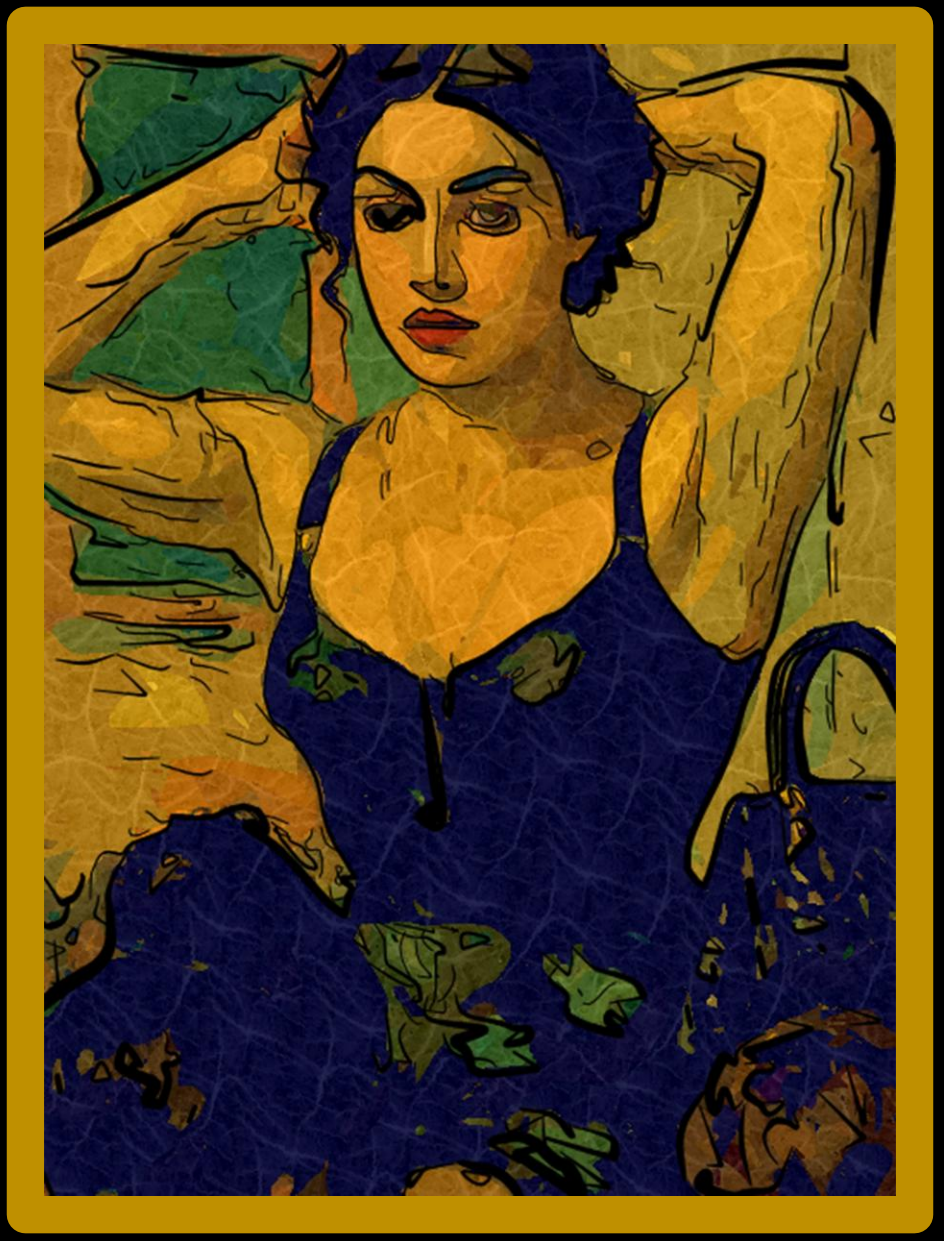


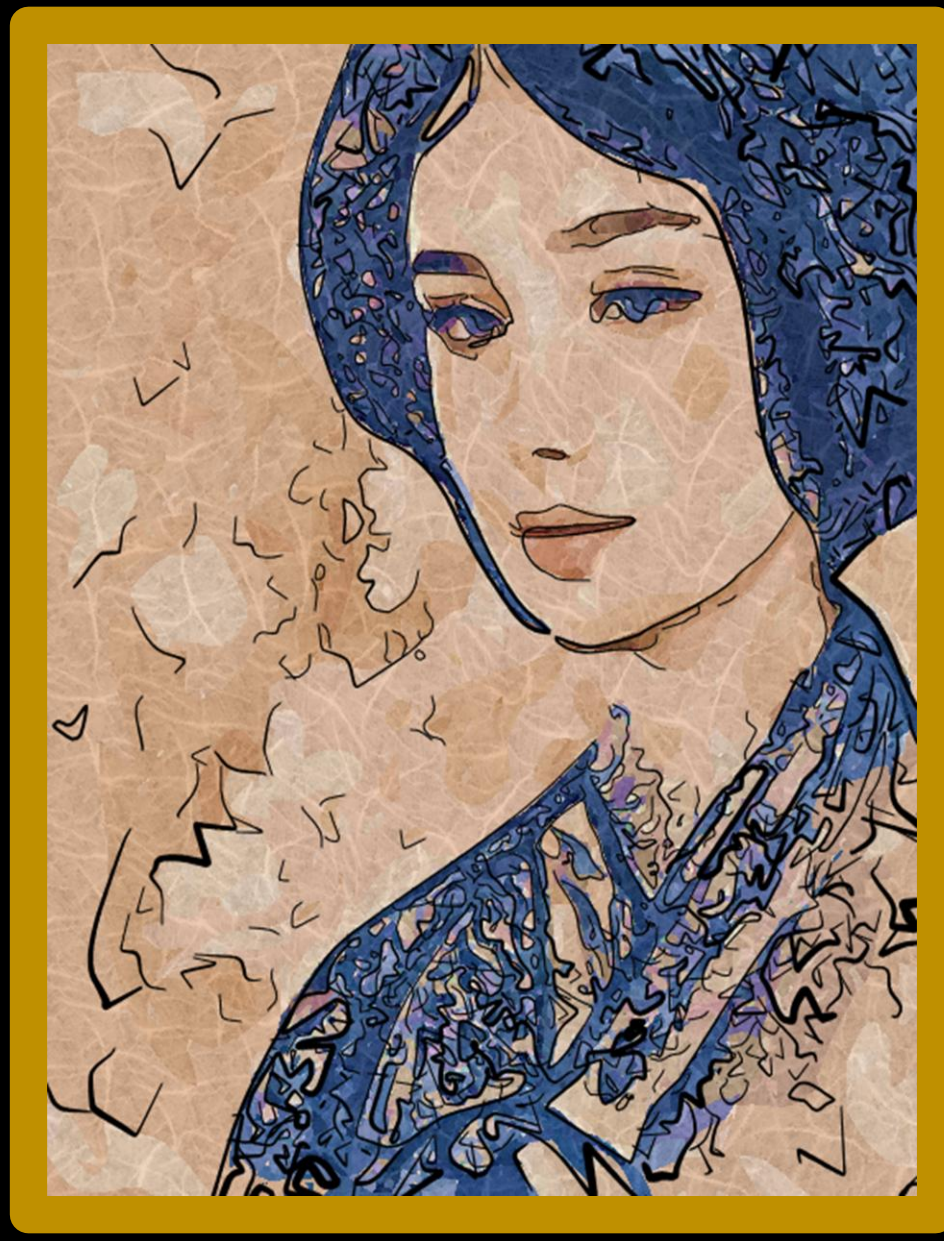


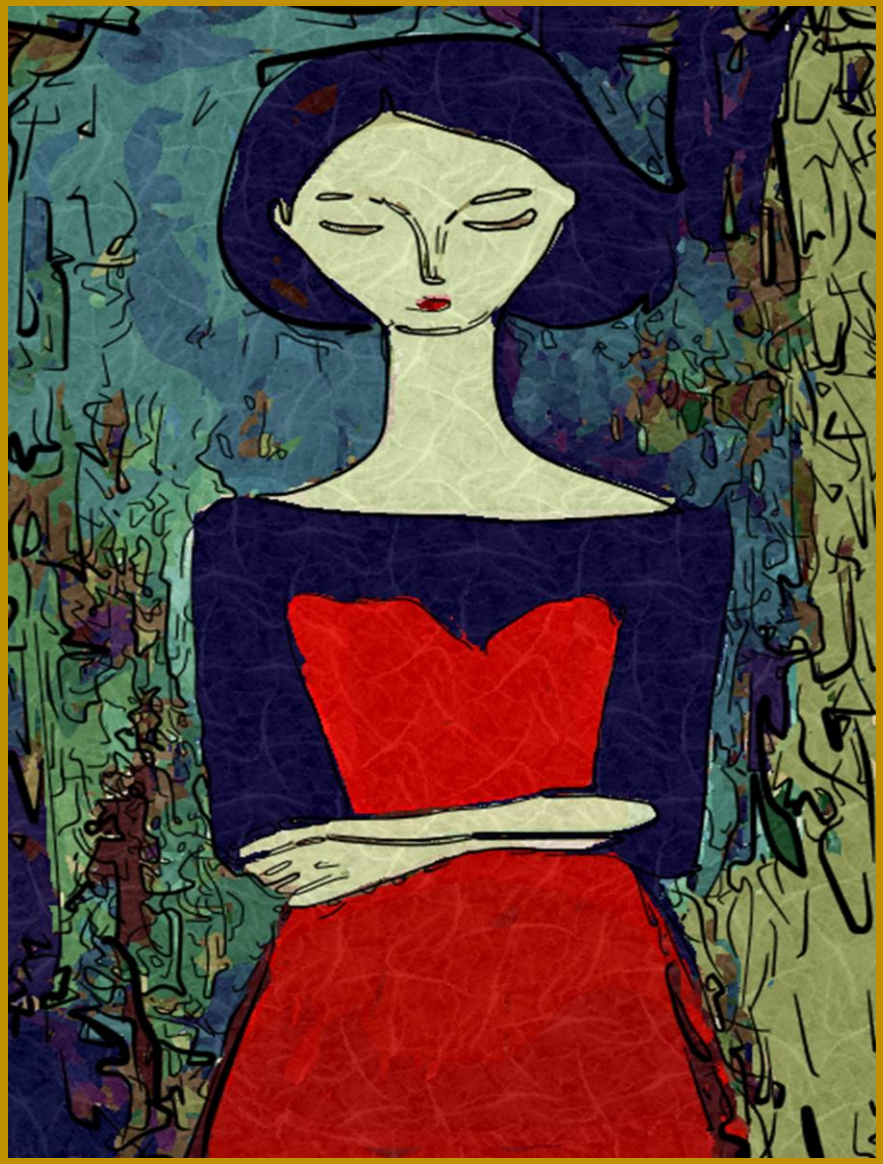


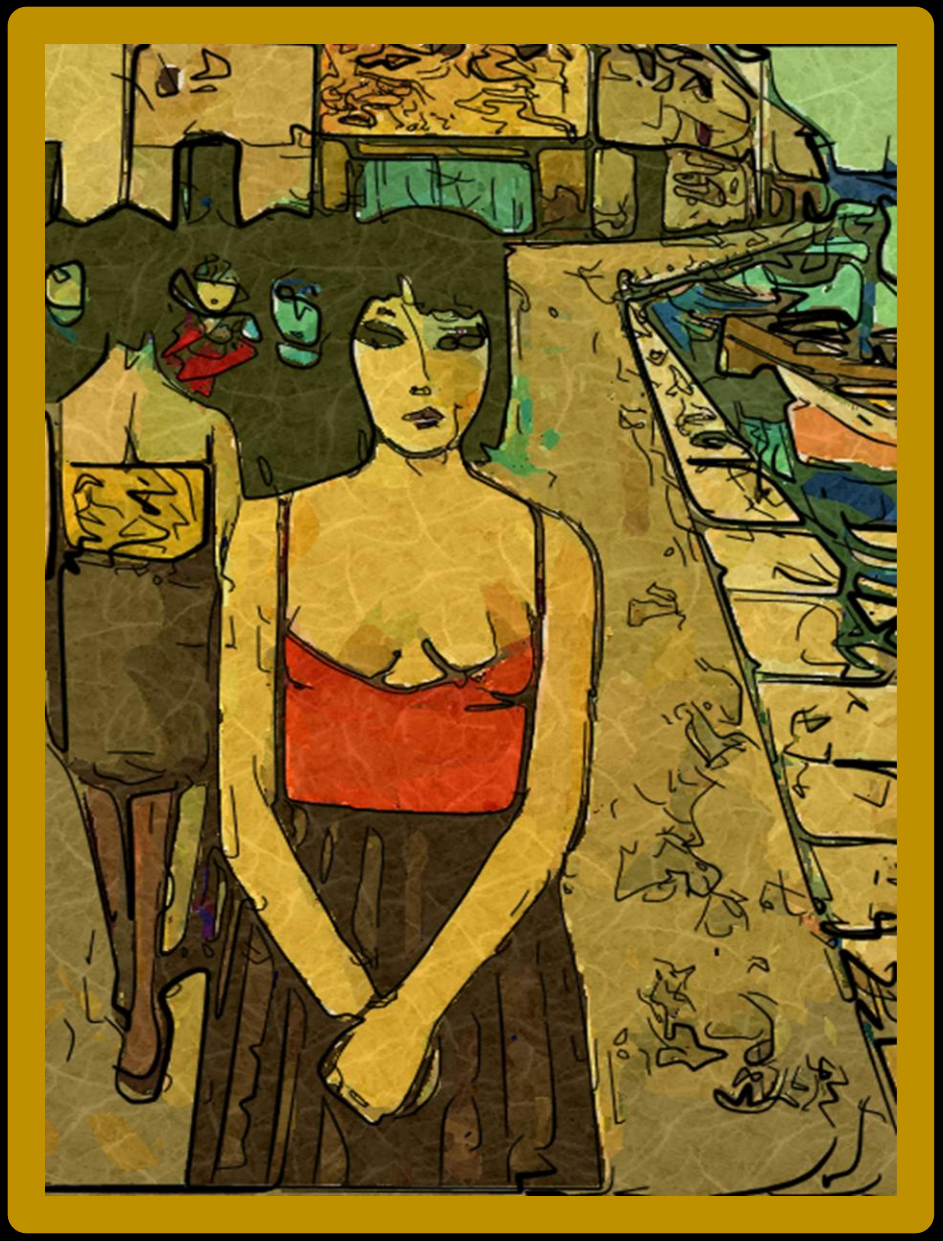


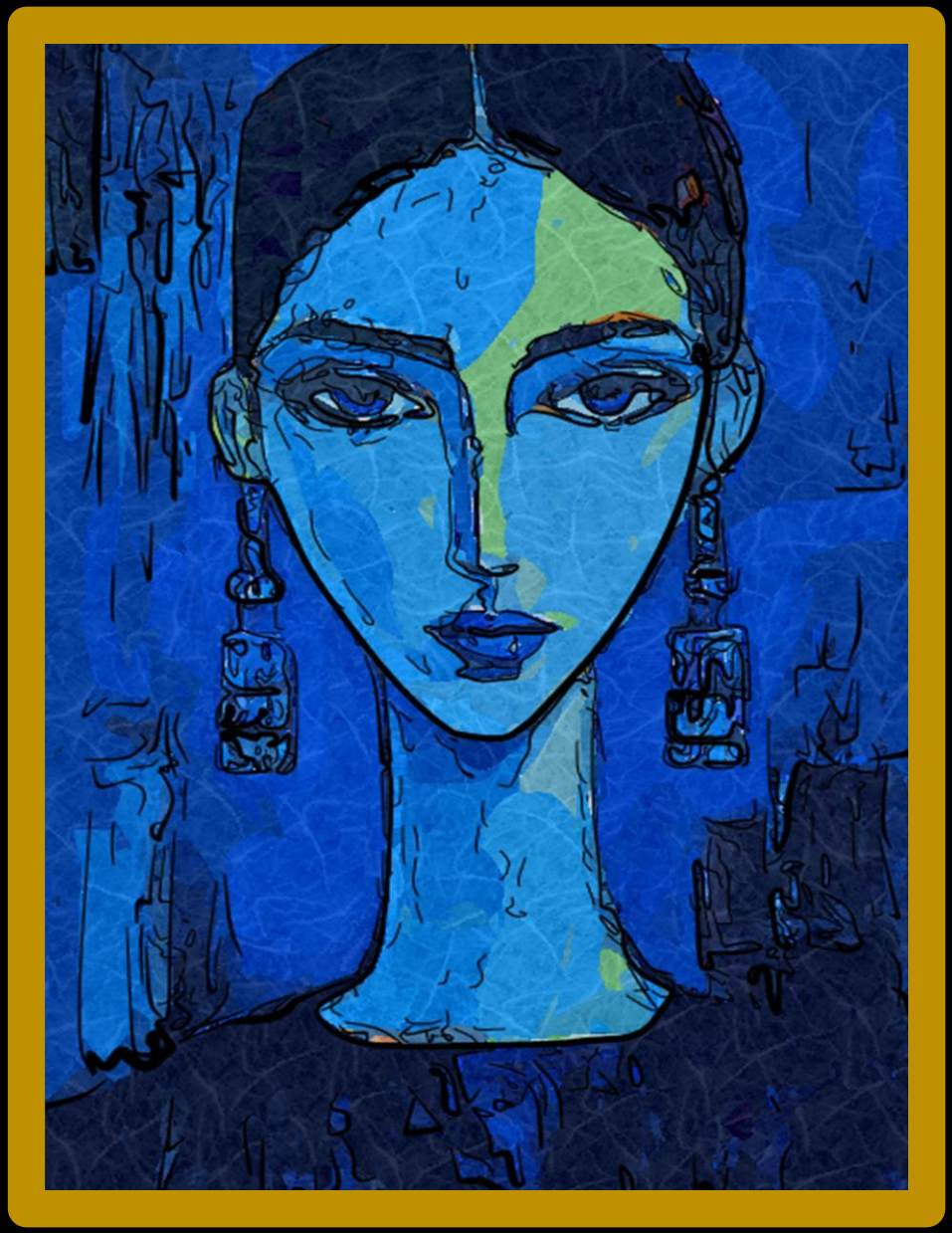


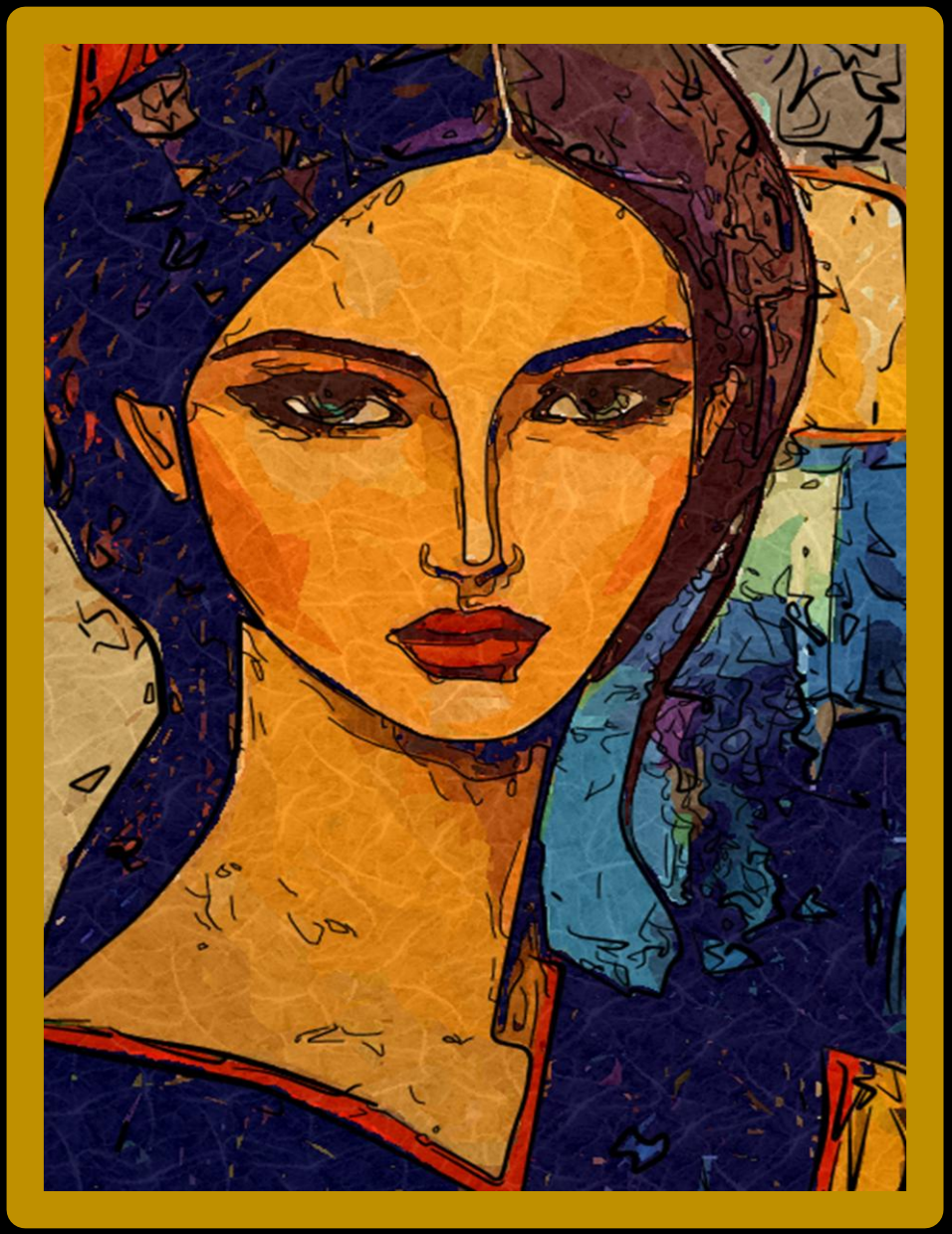


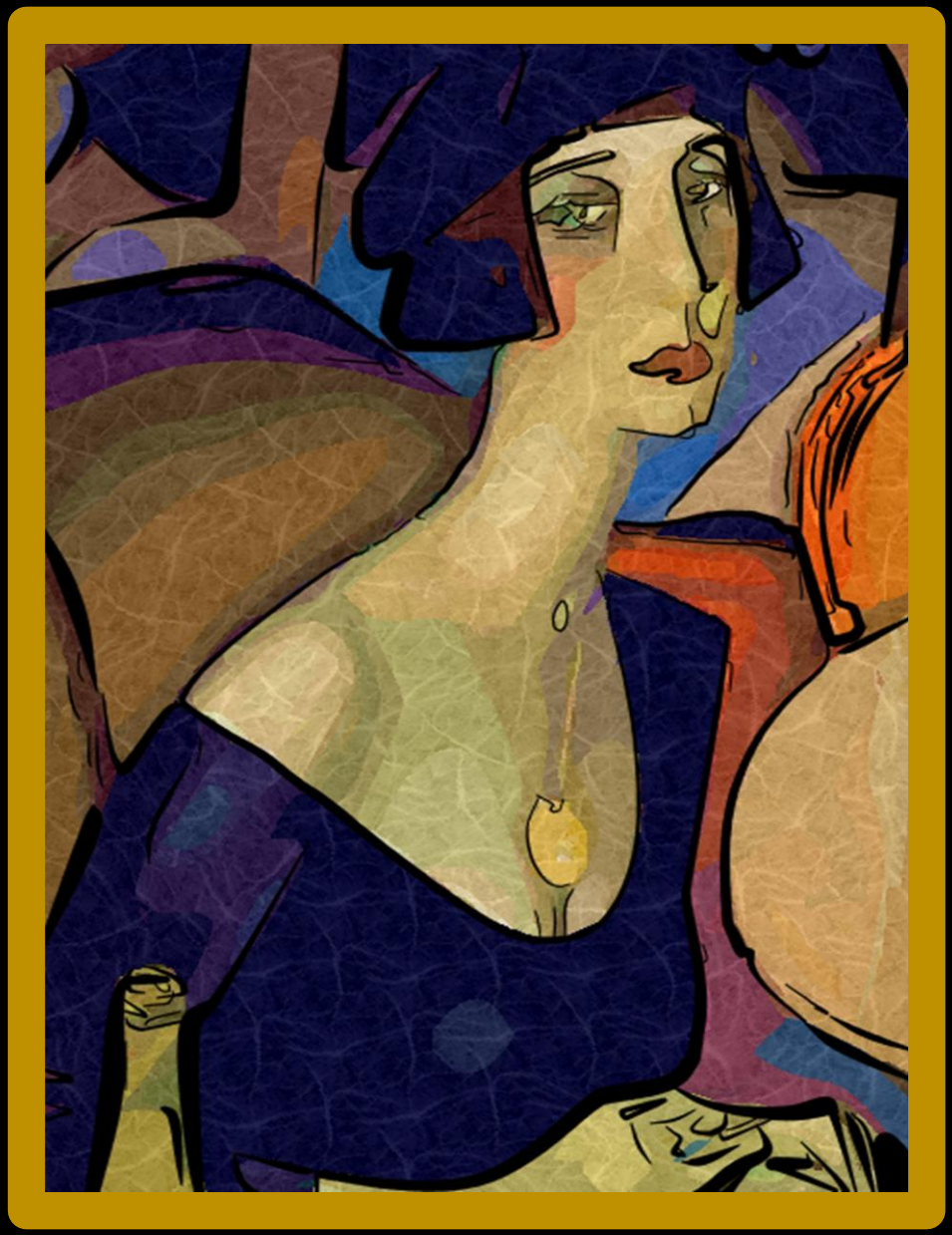


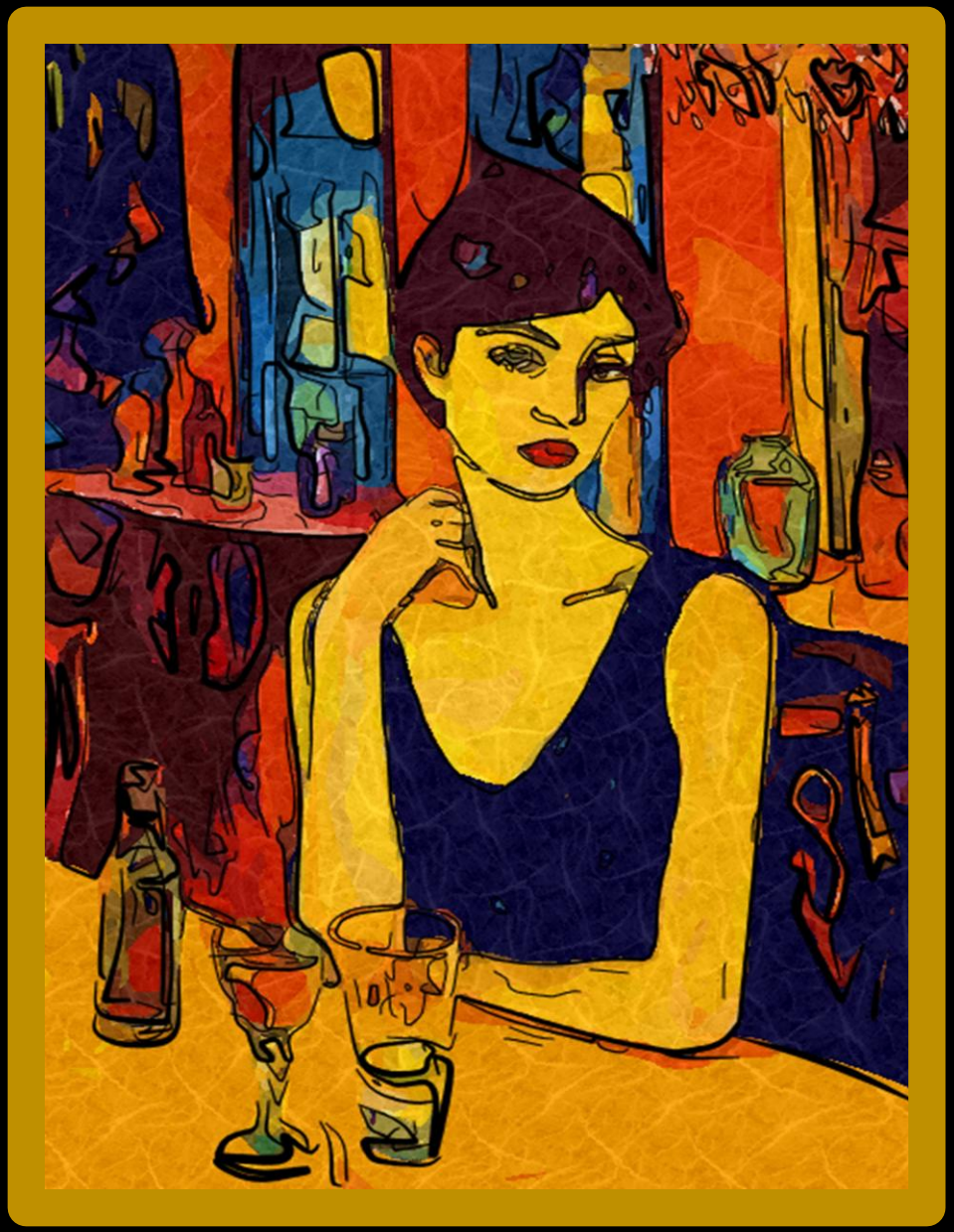


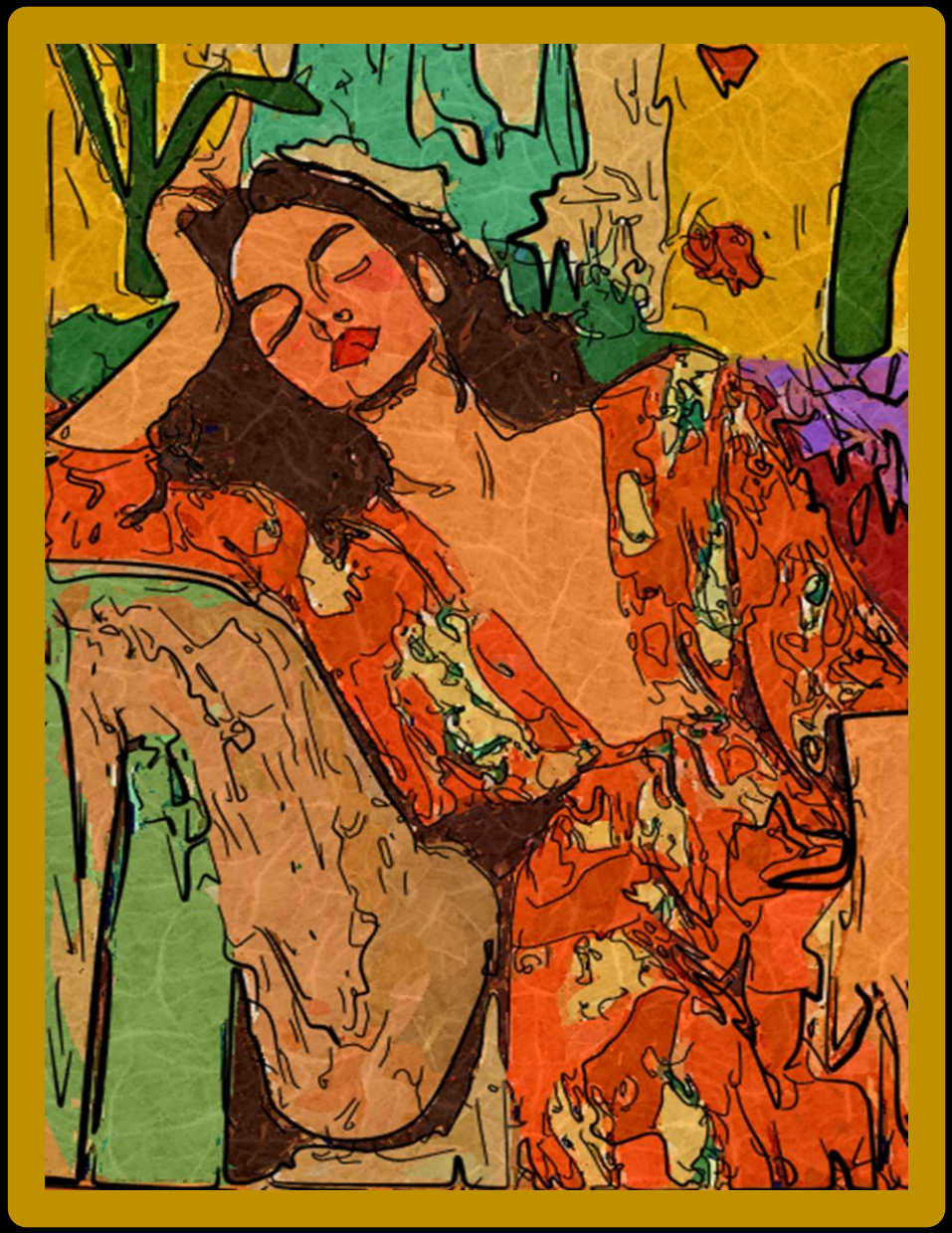


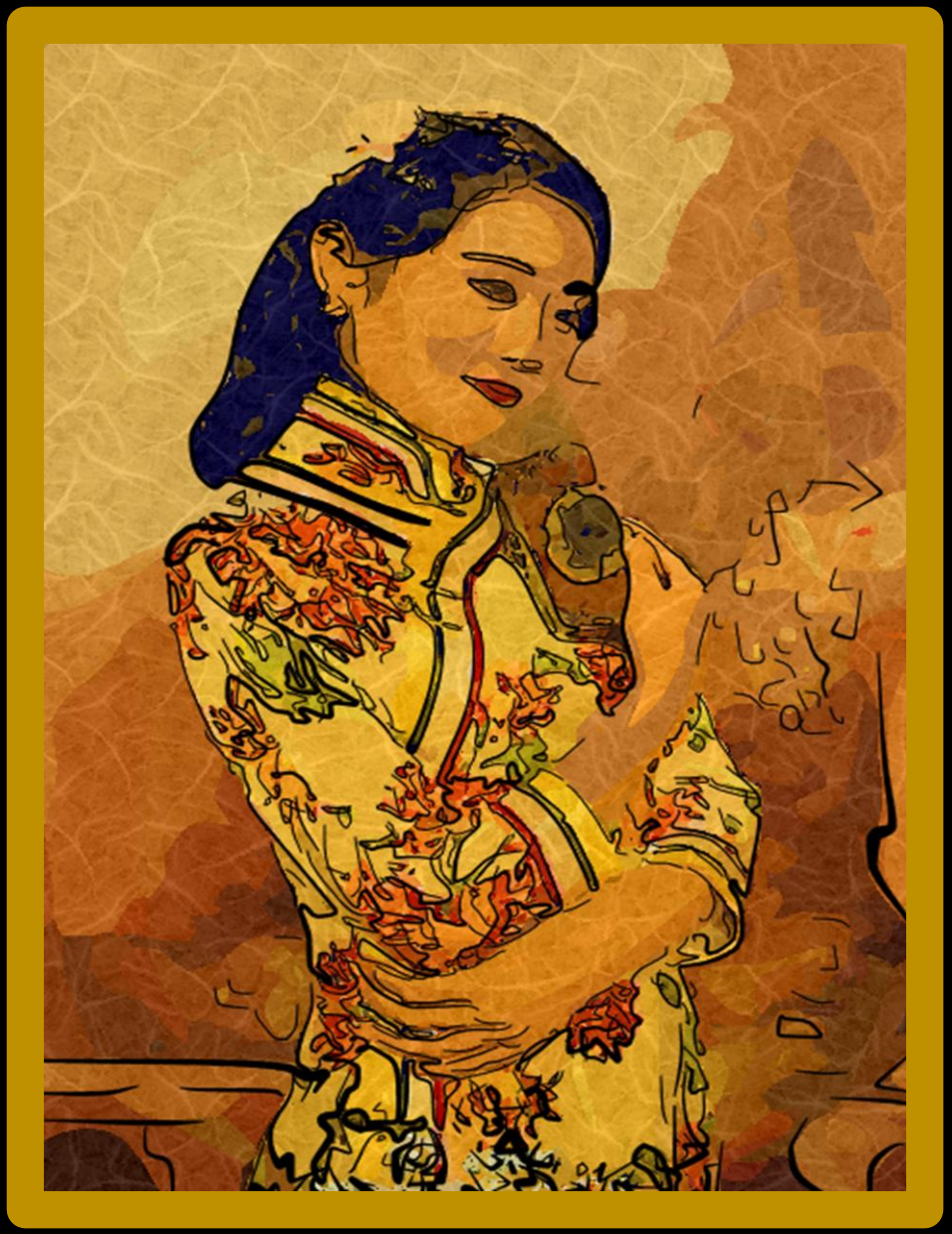


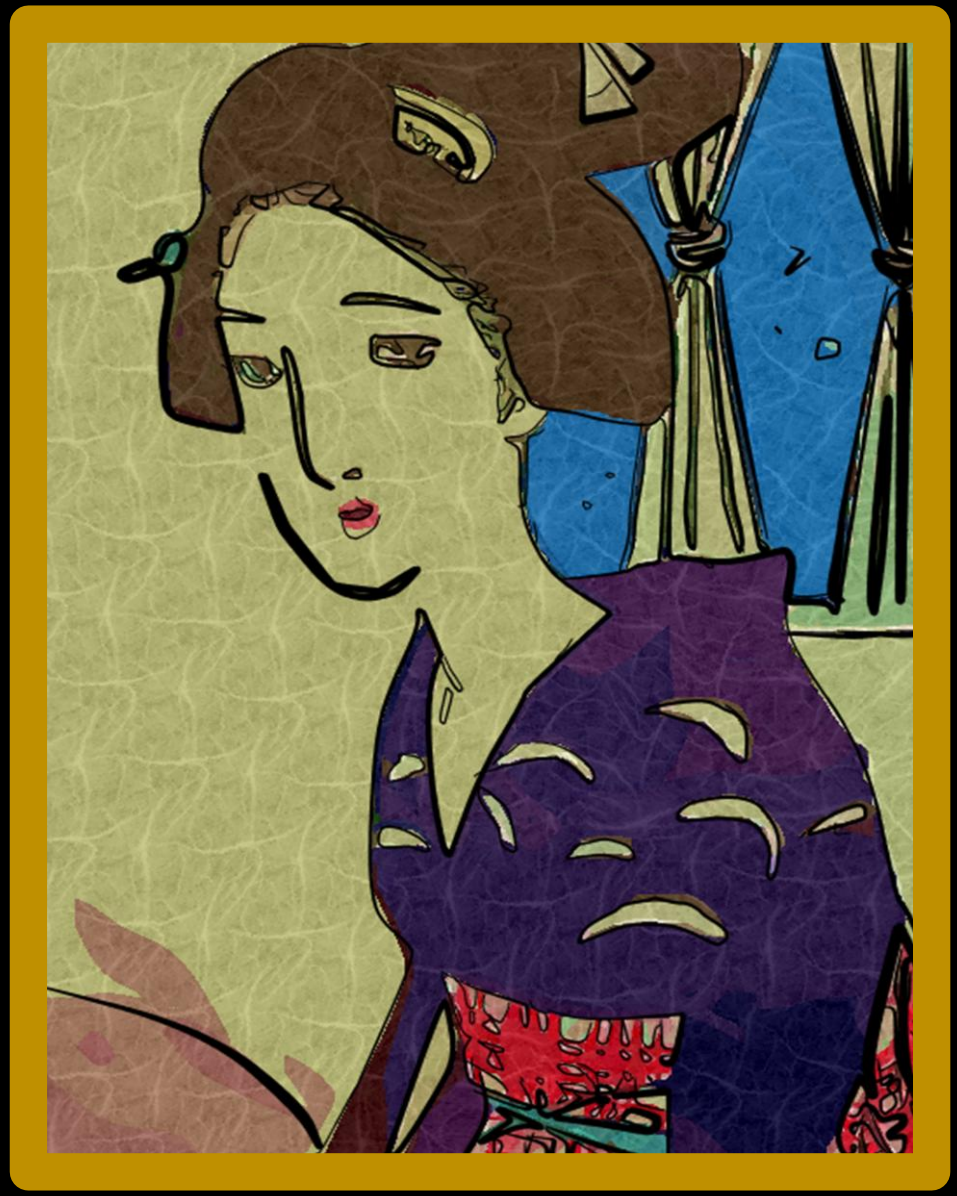


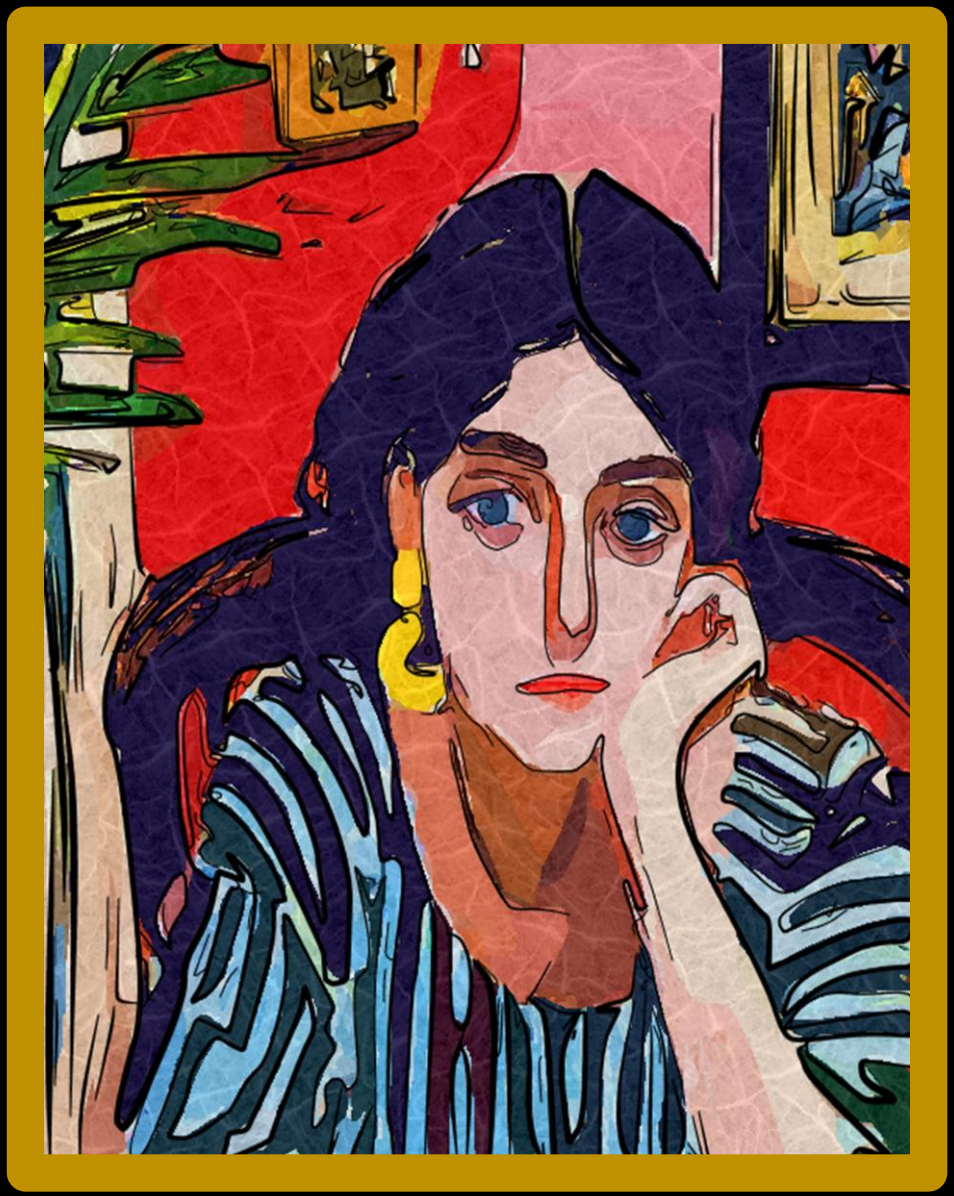


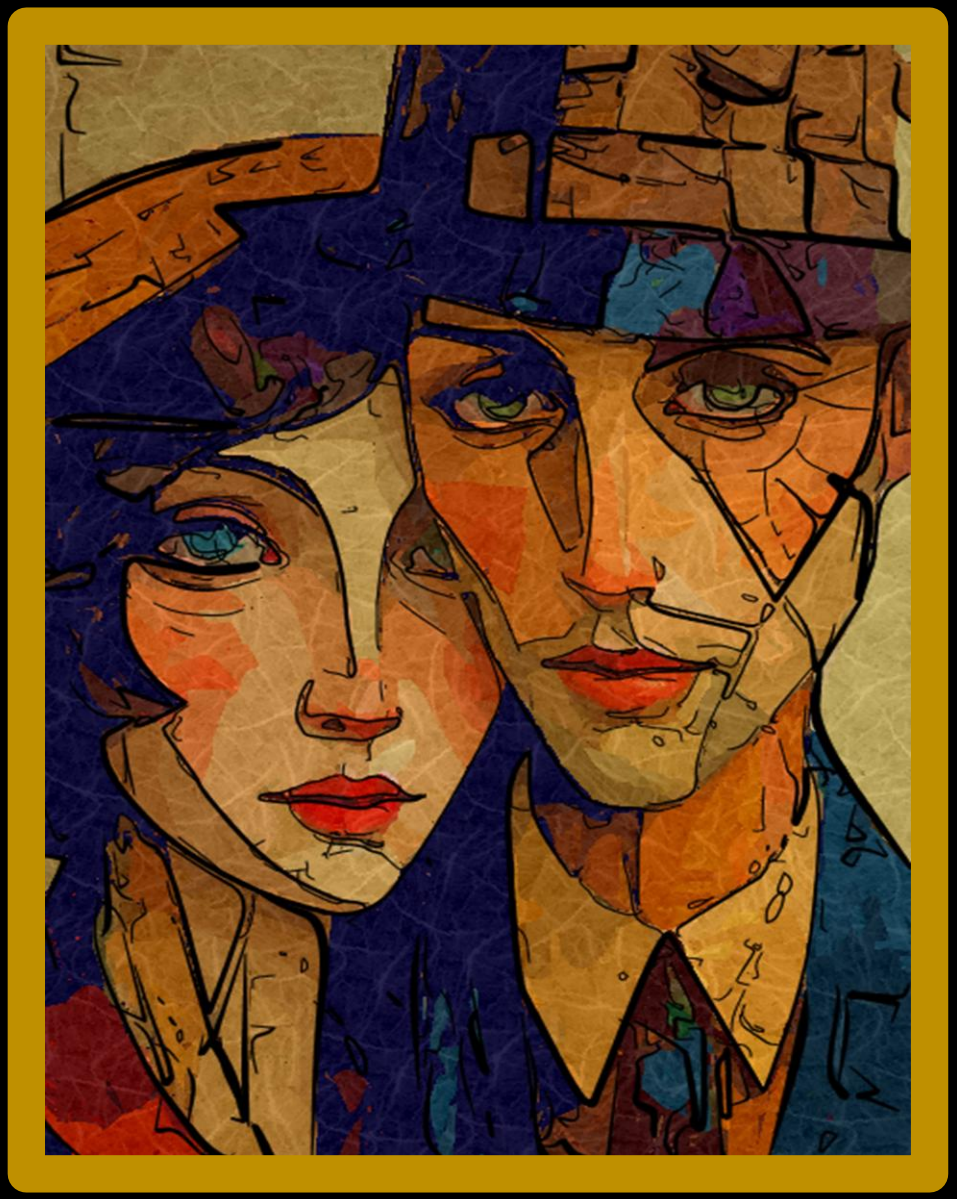


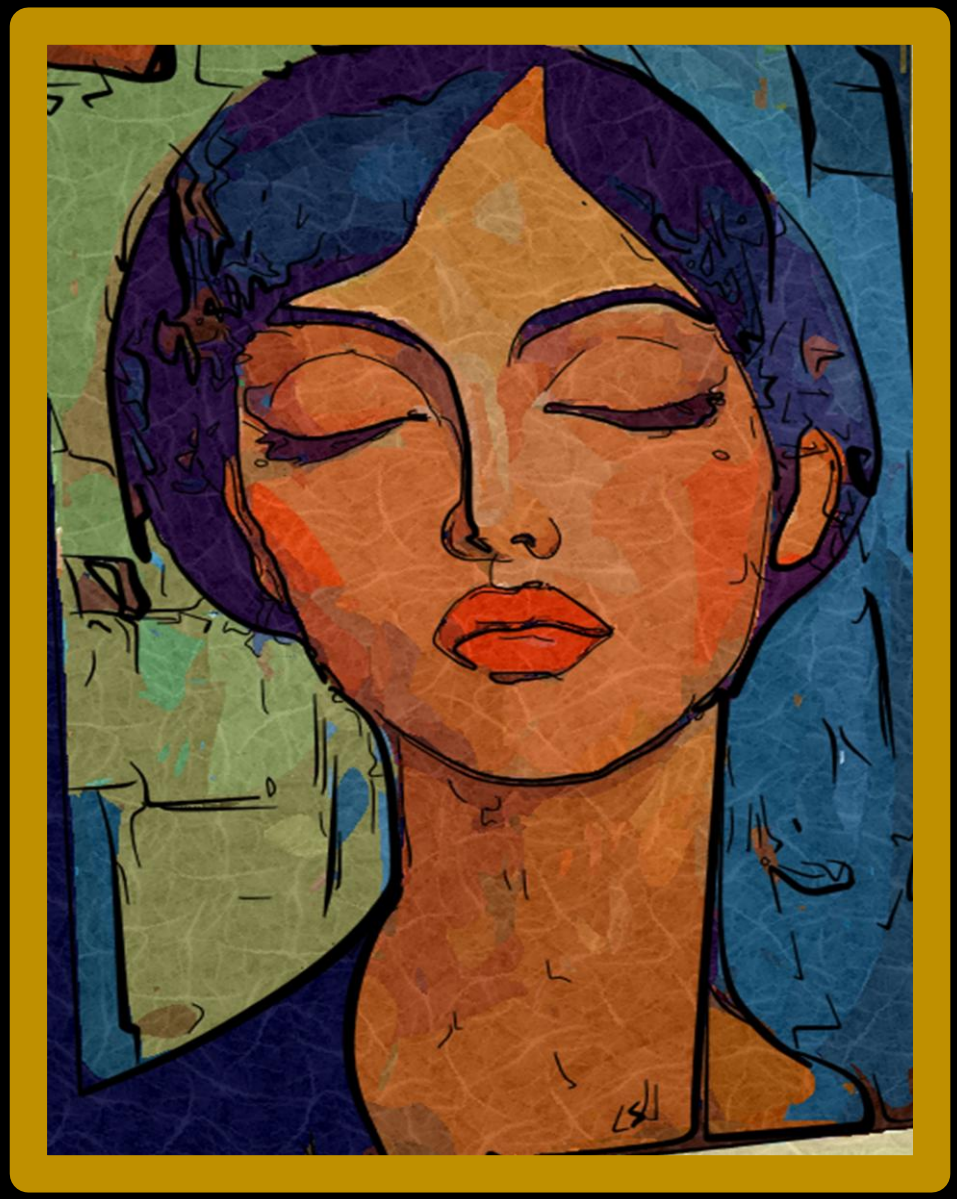


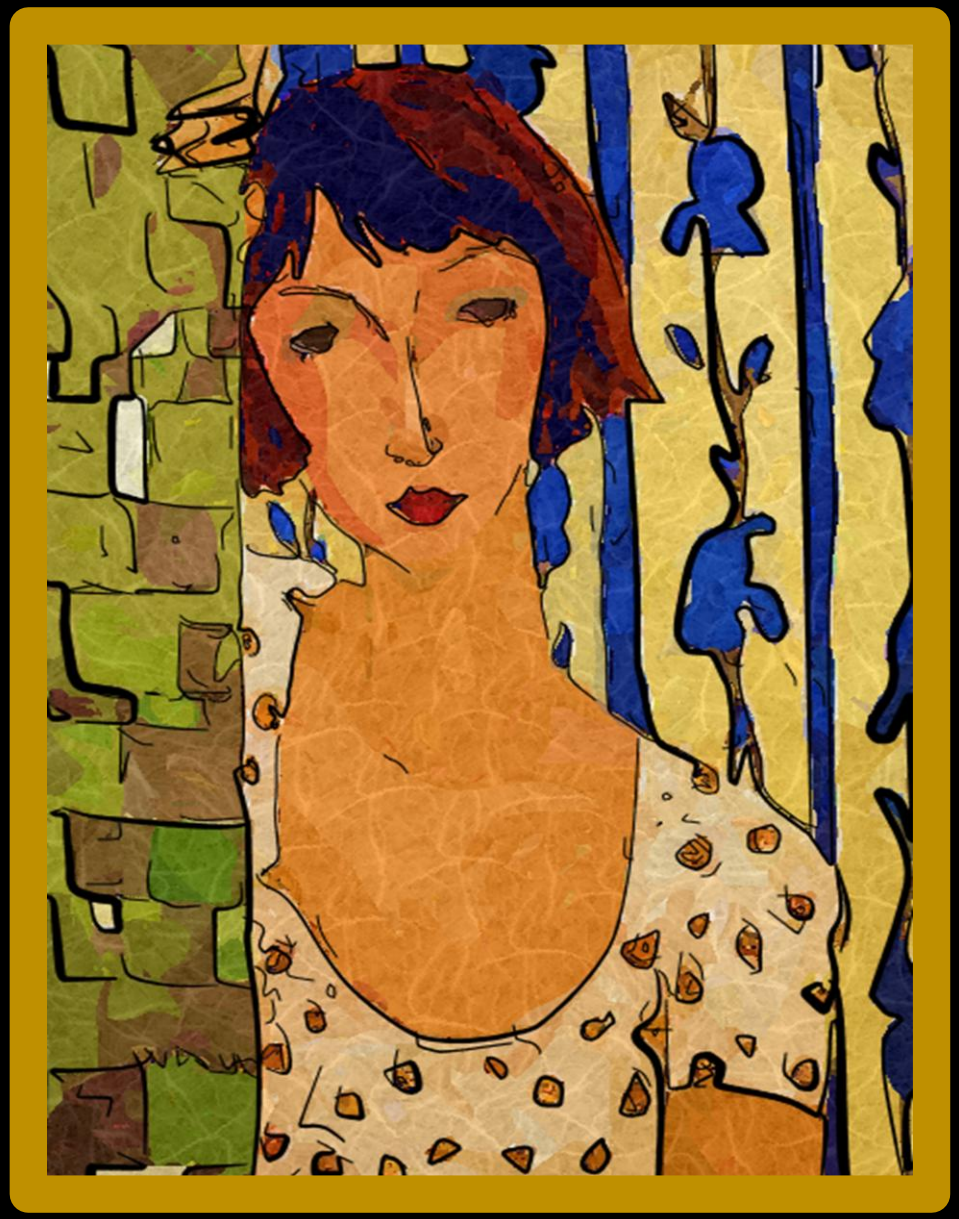


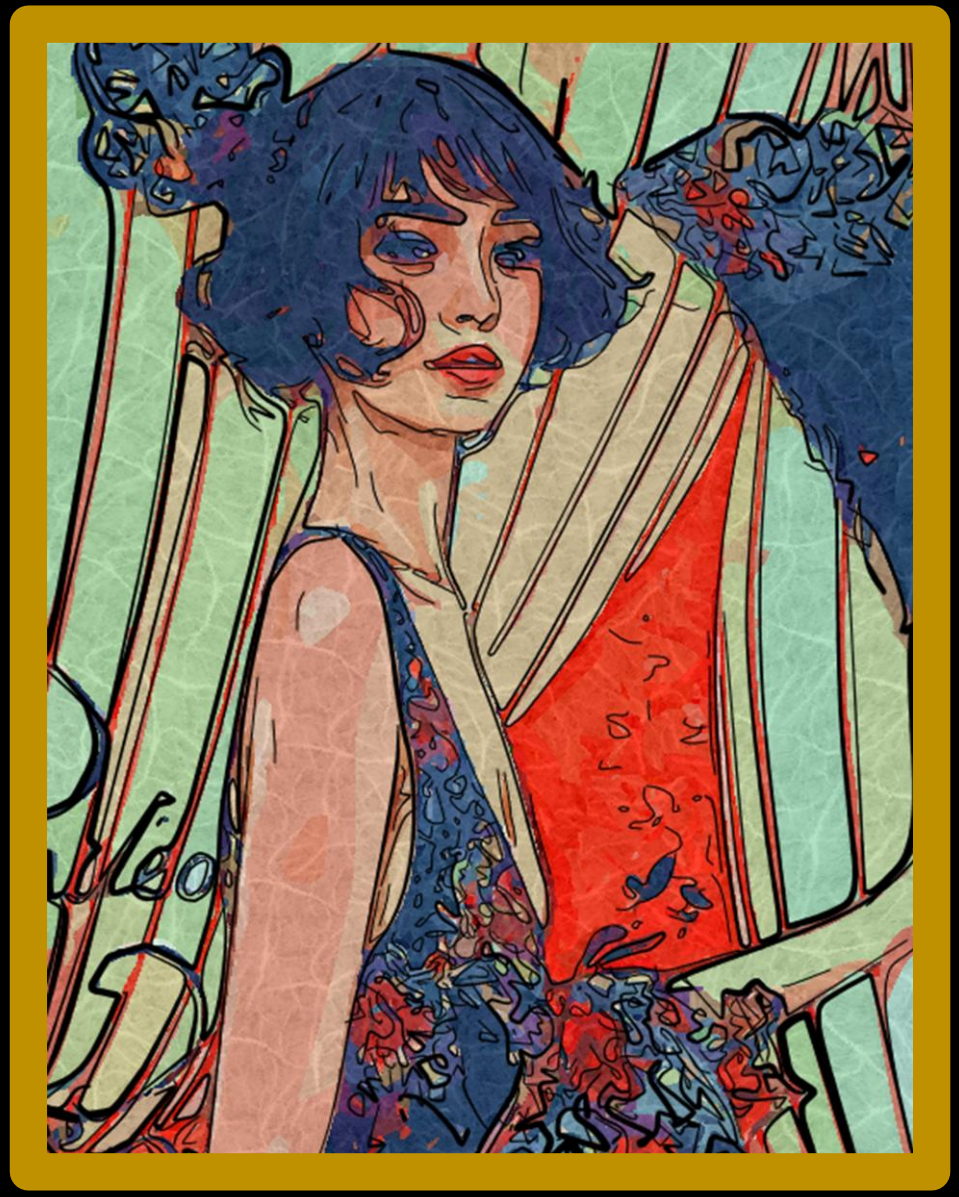


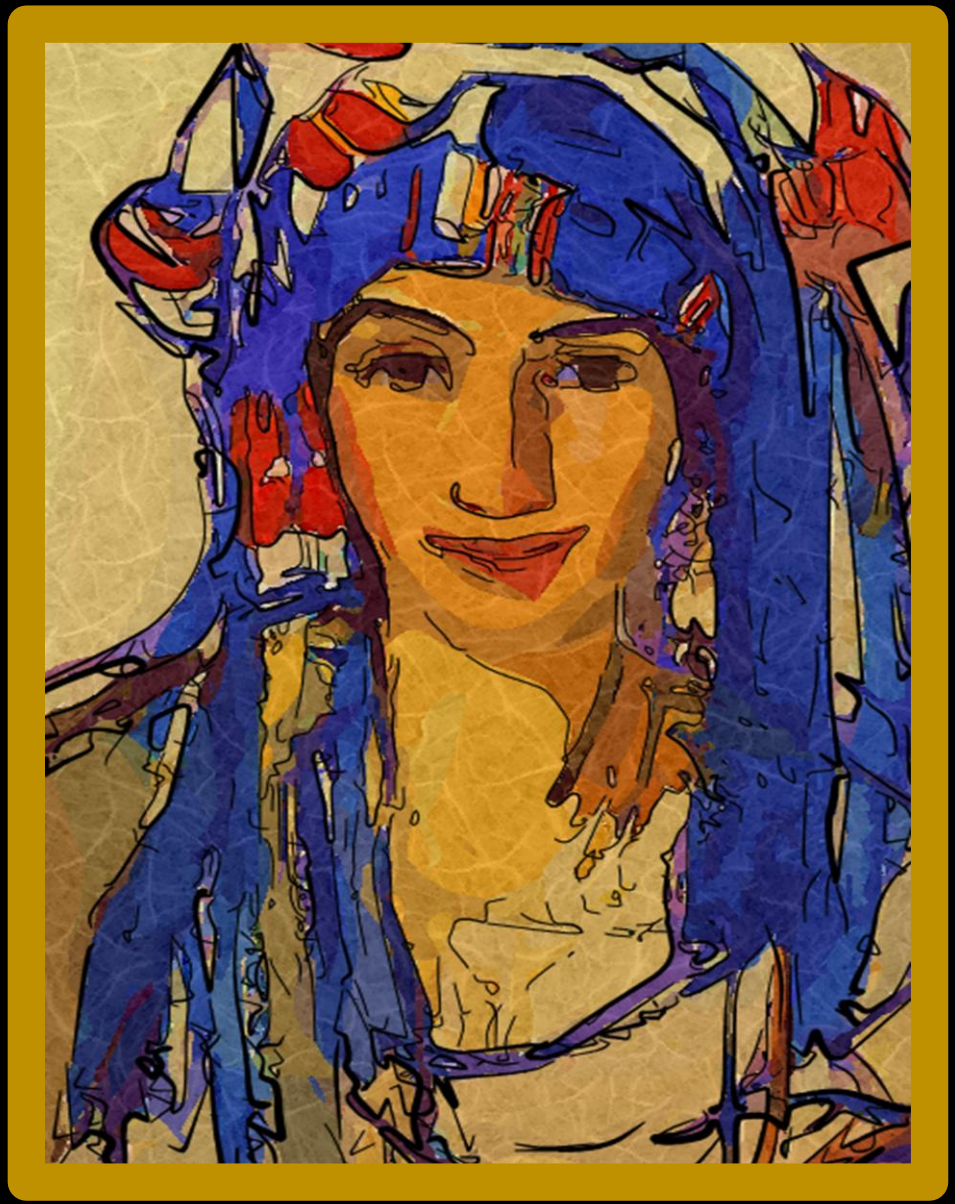


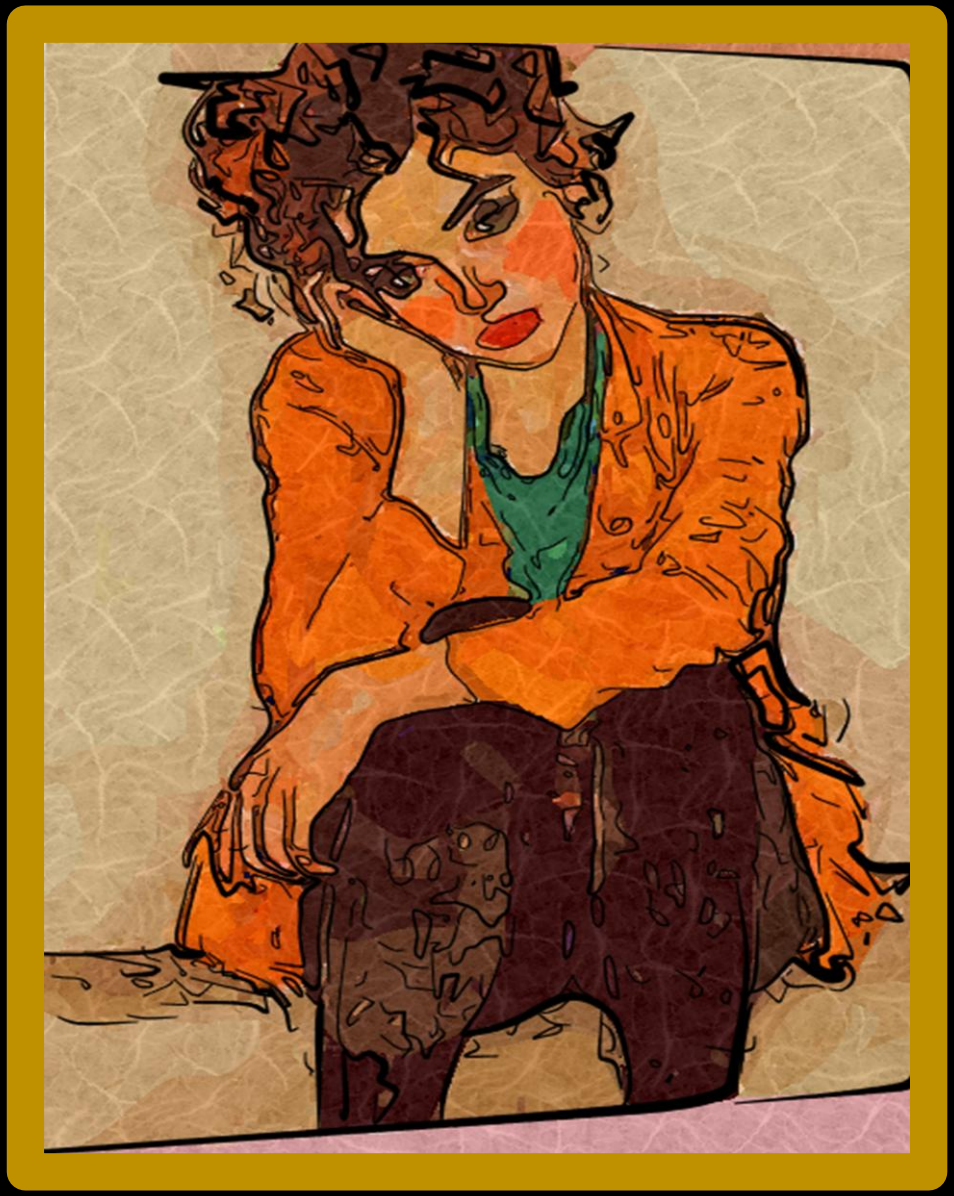


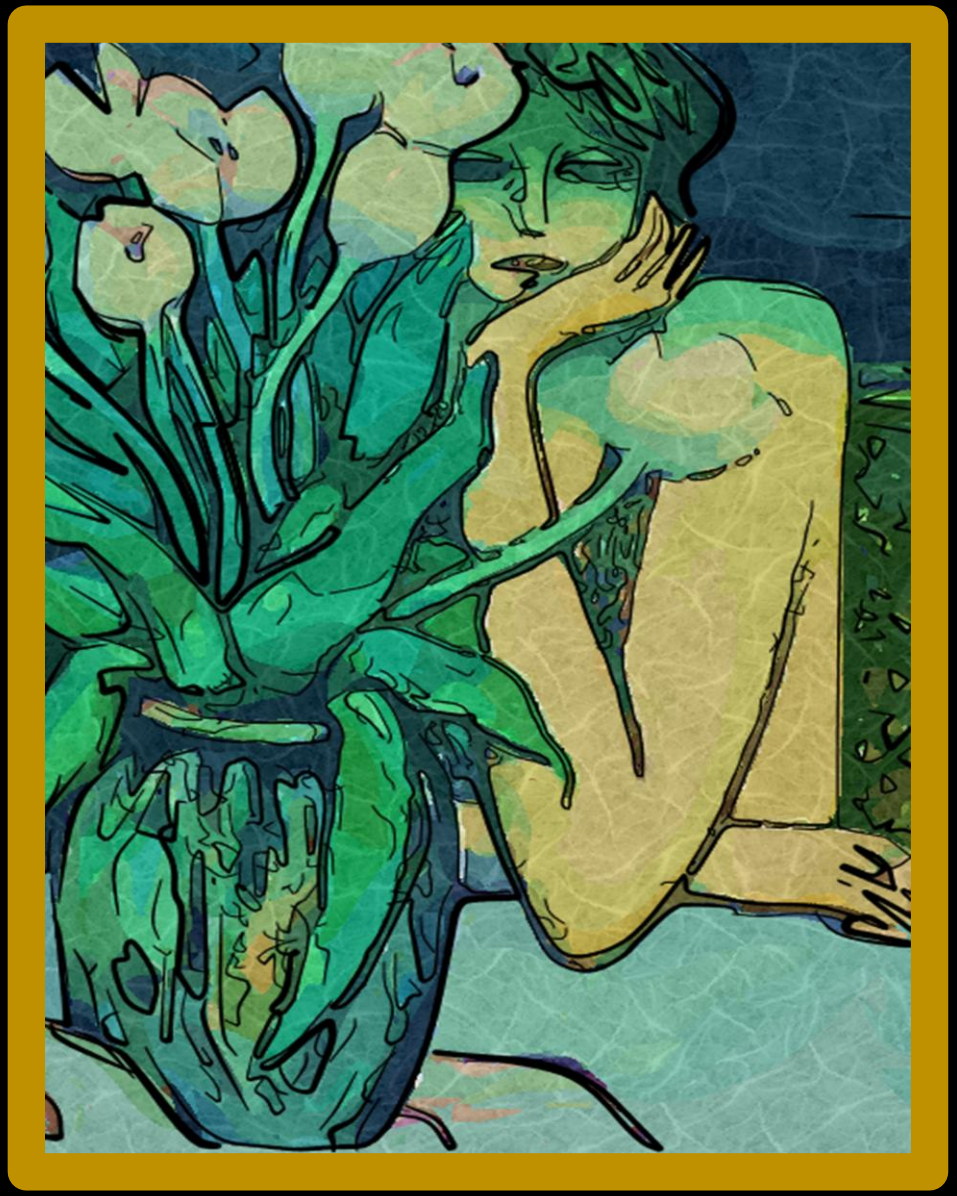


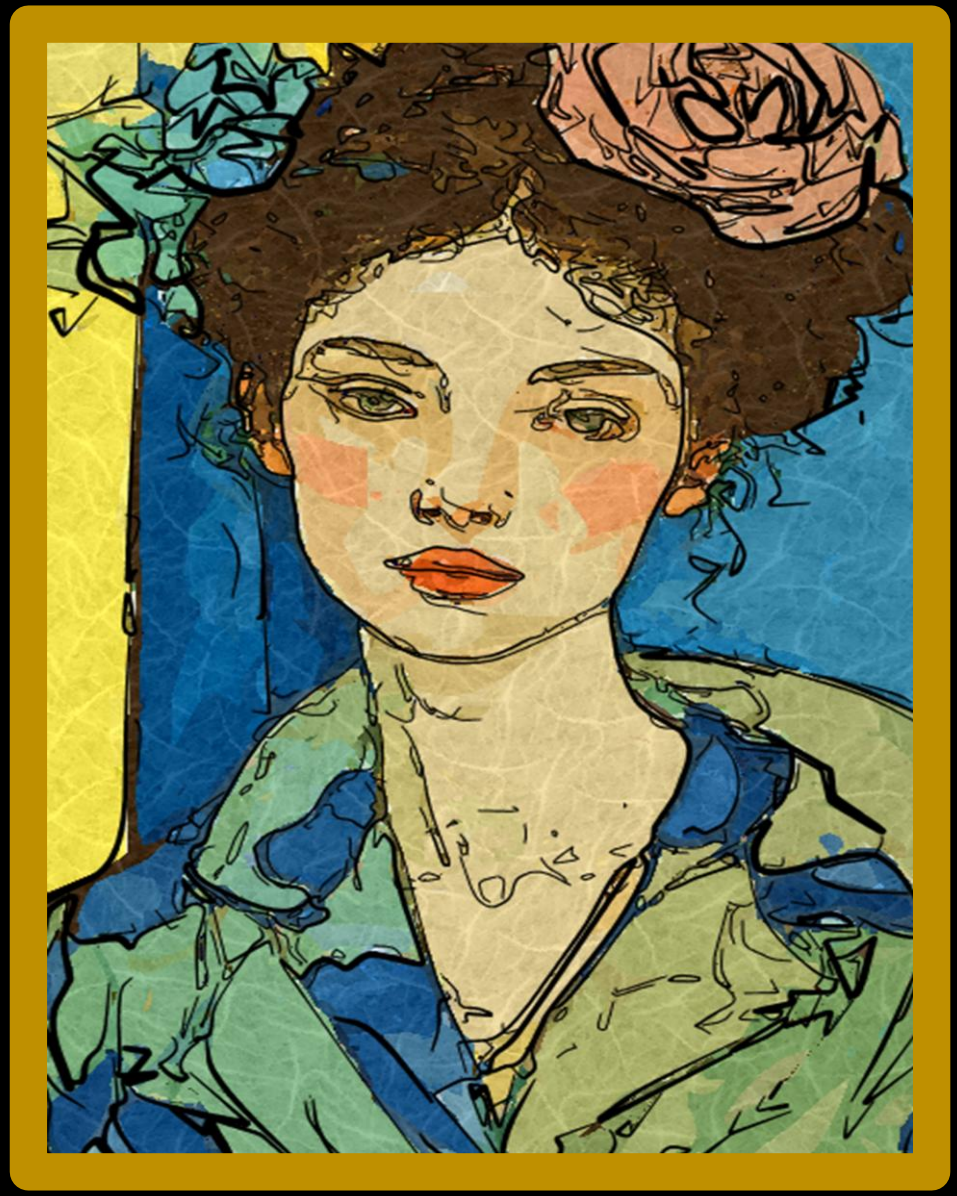




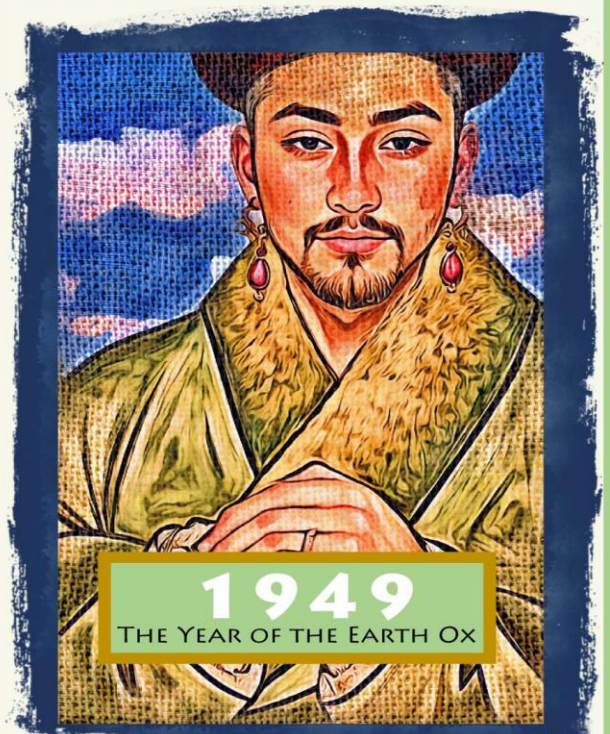








KITKAT GENTLEMAN'S LOUNGE
ZHONGSHAN ROAD, INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT
SHANGHAI, REPUBLIC OF CHINA



GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY

KITKAT GENTLEMAN'S LOUNGE
ZHONGSHAN ROAD, INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT
SHANGHAI, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY - WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. 2025

THE QUINTESSENTIAL TRAITS OF A PROPER ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

SPRINGTIME
CATALOG 2026

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY
WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. 2026

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY - WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. SINGAPORE - 2025

A MIND TOTALLY FILLED WITH

MISGUIDED DECISIONS

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY - WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. SINGAPORE - 2025

A MIND TOTALLY FILLED WITH

MISGUIDED DECISIONS 2

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY - WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. SINGAPORE - 2025

A MIND TOTALLY FILLED WITH

MISGUIDED DECISIONS 3

Riu Yang Tai Shrine

Eight Immortals Temple

HOBO TOURS LTD.

WWWG Productions Ltd. Singapore - 2026

PARALYZED BY SUDDEN UNCERTAINTY

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY

WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. 2025

Hanging Out With

THE SPIRITS OF PRENG

WAT PRENG

PHAIBUN THANYAHAN

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY

WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. 2025

FROM MY FRONT PORCH

I CAN SEE THE MULTIVERSE 2

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY

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